



No. CCVI.]	Contents	[DECEMBER 1899
		PAGE
One of Ourselves Chapters IV.-VI.		97
By L. B. WALFORD		
The Evolution of a Reputation		130
By I. A. TAYLOR		
Jane Anne—Lump		143
By MARY DOROTHEA EVANS		
From a Test Angler's Diary		149
By GEORGE A. B. DEWAR		
The Wooing of Sara Lepell		157
By VIOLET A. SIMPSON		
Wild Fruits		177
By the Rev. JOHN VAUGHAN, M.A.		
At the Sign of the Ship		183
By ANDREW LANG		

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK AND BOMBAY



MR. LANG'S CHRISTMAS BOOKS.

REVIEW OF REVIEWS.—‘These fairy books of Mr. Lang’s will be a continual delight to countless children. Spurring on the imagination with their allurements, they turn the world for each baby-reader into one huge land of fairies, of giants, and of dwarfs.’

DAILY NEWS.—‘The success of this series of tales from the fairy lore of all nations has been very great. To some extent that success may be due to the beauty of the get-up of these volumes and the excellence of the illustrations of Mr. H. J. Ford, whose designs have both grace and humour.’



THE FAIR PERSIAN LIGHTS THE CANDLE.

(From the ‘Arabian Nights.’)

Crown 8vo. gilt edges, price 6s.

THE BLUE FAIRY BOOK.

With 138 Illustrations by H. J. FORD and
G. P. JACOBUS HOOD.

Crown 8vo. gilt edges, price 6s.

THE RED FAIRY BOOK.

With 100 Illustrations by H. J. FORD and
LANCELOT SPEED.

Crown 8vo. gilt edges, price 6s.

THE GREEN FAIRY BOOK.

With 101 Illustrations by H. J. FORD.

Crown 8vo. gilt edges, price 6s.

THE YELLOW FAIRY BOOK.

With 104 Illustrations by H. J. FORD.

Crown 8vo. gilt edges, price 6s.

THE PINK FAIRY BOOK.

With 67 Illustrations by H. J. FORD.

Crown 8vo. gilt edges, price 6s.

THE TRUE STORY BOOK.

With 66 Illustrations by C. H. M. KERR,
LOCKHART BOGLE, H. J. FORD, and
LANCELOT SPEED.

Crown 8vo. gilt edges, price 6s.

THE RED TRUE STORY BOOK.

With 100 Illustrations by H. J. FORD.

Crown 8vo. gilt edges, price 6s.

THE ANIMAL STORY BOOK.

With 67 Illustrations by H. J. FORD.

Crown 8vo. gilt edges, price 6s.

THE BLUE POETRY BOOK.

With 100 Illustrations by H. J. FORD and
LANCELOT SPEED.

Crown 8vo. gilt edges, price 6s.

THE ARABIAN NIGHTS ENTERTAINMENTS.

With 66 Illustrations by H. J. FORD.

LONGMANS, GREEN, & CO., London, New York, and Bombay.

.
.

ht
ld

as
ese
ce

1

HR,

.
.

1

S.

2

LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER 1899.

*One of Ourselves.*¹

BY L. B. WALFORD,
AUTHOR OF 'MR. SMITH,' &c.

CHAPTER IV.

A BACKWARD GLANCE.

WE have perhaps been rather cruel to three defenceless young girls, in thus presenting them to our readers for the first time without a word of explanation; but if so, we have merely followed the fashion of a world which seldom troubles itself to look below the surface, taking people for what they are, and not for what they might have been.

Elizabeth, Mary, and Georgina Colvin, orphaned at an age when parental care, affection, and discipline are most ardently needed, could scarcely remember the time when their happiness or welfare was anything to anybody but themselves and Lionel, of whom more anon.

Father and mother had died within a short time of each other, and then had ensued the usual desultory up-bringing and buffeting from pillar to post of children whom nobody wants, and whose needs are greater than their means.

Colonel Colvin alive, and drawing double pay with his regiment in India, had indeed done fairly well, even while being scrupulously drained by an extravagant, pleasure-loving wife at home, who exacted every farthing her husband could send her, before borrowing, begging, and stealing elsewhere; but the poor little colonel dead, it soon appeared that, deny himself as he

¹ Copyright 1899 by Longmans, Green & Co.

might, he had never been able to save money; and while his affairs were yet unsettled, and everyone was asking, and no one was answering the question of the widow's future, she solved it herself by following him to the grave. Thus a pittance was saved from the wreck.

But it was little enough, and relations had perforce to come forward—all inclined to look askance on Elizabeth Colvin's children. She was gone, and a good riddance; but her helpless, troublesome offspring remained, and could not be sent to the workhouse.

Bet and Poll, young as they were, remembered for many a day afterwards words and looks which made them wince at this period; remembered, too, the horror of having their new black frocks hastily put on, and their hair brushed damply out because a visitor was below and wished to see them.

The little girls, clinging to each other, would go shyly down, half miserable, half expectant—because, after all, something good *might* be going to happen, and any change from their dreary lodgings would be welcome; but they were glad enough to get upstairs again when the scene was over.

They were not pretty children (they grew better-looking by-and-by), but, had they been summoned to their parents' drawing-room, there would surely have been smiles and kisses and that kind of indulgent notice bestowed which the little ones look for when fond proprietary eyes are upon them.

As it was, there would be a dismal half-hour, and relief untold when it was over.

They would fly back to baby—Georgie was four years Bet's junior—and kiss and cuddle her, telling her how the horrid uncle or aunt had come and gone, and brought no pretty boxes of goodies, nor even wanted to see baby.

Bet would mimic the face of the departed visitor. Poll, who had no turn of her own that way, would shriek with laughter at her sister's contortions. Merry little Georgie would join in for company.

It was a pity that they did not laugh downstairs. There the two were as solemn as judges; and whereas a confiding manner and gay prattle might have been the making of them, their short answers and forbidding countenances were discussed and animadverted upon all round the family.

'And they *are* so like their mother!' But it was agreed that they were not so pretty as their mother; and as Elizabeth had had

nothing desirable but her prettiness, it was felt that she ought at least to have bequeathed this intact, instead of robbing the unmistakable likeness of its one good point.

There were whippers, too, that the orphans were not likely to be desirable companions for cousins of their own age.

'I shall certainly not take them,' Colonel Colvin's eldest married sister led the way; 'I have my own girls to think of.'

'Indian children, you know,' insinuated another; though Bet had been sent home when only five, and Poll was three; while Georgie had never been in India at all.

Lionel was the only one of the four who could recall with any distinctness the shining minarets and dusky, turbaned coolies; and Lionel, strange to say, did not have it cast in his teeth.

He was luckier than the rest. He was at school, and was left there.

Presently he was even sent on to Harrow, and during the terms was happy enough, but the holidays were awful. He never knew to whom he was going; sometimes he did not know if he were going anywhere.

And he had no money, and tortures would not have wrung from him the fact.

Little Spartan that he was, he hid his throes—the terrors of uncertainty, the apprehension of being forgotten, the loneliness, the neglect, the sense of disgrace—as nearer and nearer drew the fatal day, and no letter or message came for him. Oh, he was all right (in answer to well-meant commiserations); he had no need to bother.

And he would run off whistling; but would catch his breath when the letters were handed round presently, and stifle the sob in his heart when it was disappointment, only disappointment again for him.

In the end something always did turn up, it is true. Whereat the poor boy, knowing nothing of relations' wrangles which had preceded the summons, would be up in the air at once, taking it for granted that no one had suspected previous misgivings, and swaggering bravely of the jolly time to come.

But he said as little about it as need be afterwards. He even managed to keep to himself that, most of his days having been spent in the company of servants or of such companions as could be picked up, he had looked forward more eagerly to the return to work than he had ever done to the morning on which should begin the supposed play.

He rarely saw his sisters.

So that they were a revelation to him when Fortune, with a sudden whisk of her wheel, brought the four pathetic young creatures together some years later, and just when things were at their worst with one and all.

Schooldays were over—they had been curtailed in the case of the girls—and all that they knew of their brother was that he lived in a lodging and worked in an office.

When met, he was kind, but diffident. He did not seem to understand their high spirits and irrepressible vivacity behind backs. The life had been well-nigh crushed out of him, and long, unrelaxing self-repression had resulted in his scarcely knowing how to be merry.

'Oh, we don't mind. We take it out of them when we are by ourselves,' cried Bet, gaily—but part of her gaiety was also assumed, and had a reckless, defiant sound. 'They're nasty things;' including the whole ring of relations with a sweep of her head; 'but if they hate us, we can hate them back;' and she looked for applause to the other two, who had been taught the responses of this creed.

Poor Lionel had nothing to say.

It hurt him more to see the sisters toss their heads and exchange glances such as sat ill upon their young faces, than to know they were neglected and despised.

If only they would not look like that, and speak like that! The light, scornful words rang in his ears afterwards.

He himself was very patient. When they asked him how he did—Bet had occasional twinges of compunction, noting, as Poll and Georgie did not note, the paleness of her brother's cheek and the dark rims round his eyes—he made answer quietly enough. He was all right; he was as well off as the others in his place; there was not much to be done in it.

Had he any chances of promotion? Well, no, not at present; he might get a rise in his 'screw' at the end of the year.

'How I wish you had enough for us to come and live with you!' cried Bet, once.

In her way she was fond of this silent, gentle, sad-looking man; and would have liked to take him into partnership with herself, Poll, and Georgie. If he would only wake up, and not look at them with such large eyes; not take so long to reply, when all three fired off questions at once.

'Why can't he take it as we take it?' Bet would exclaim,

petulantly. 'The world's no a bad place, if you batter through it head foremost; but if you let it roll over you and crush you!—and that is what Lin does. He used to have some pluck when he was at school; he was like the other boys then, but now he seems so——' and she would shrug her shoulders impatiently; yet if you looked close, there were tears in her eyes.

Once the poor girl experienced a pang of another kind. 'He hasn't even us,' she muttered to herself, bitterly. 'He is ashamed of us. He sees that we are rough and wild, and he himself is different. Oh, why can't they be kinder to *him*, even if they don't care for *us*?' suddenly she burst forth: 'Lionel wouldn't be in anyone's way; and he's good-looking and well-mannered; he would look well in their drawing-rooms; and, though he has not much to say for himself, there would be nothing to find fault with. They might remember he is father's son. He is not mother's daughters—as we are. If they only knew that this vexes him, just as it does them, perhaps they would take more notice of Lionel. But then suppose he grew to think still less of us than he does?'—in dismay. 'At least we are all tabooed together, so together we'll hang;' finally she nodded to herself. But the next time Georgie broke out into a wild rhodomontade, Bet took her up and rebuked her sharply, to the other's great surprise. 'You know how Lin hates that sort of thing!'

An influence so intermittent could, however, have but little real life in it, and as a matter of fact the sisters thought but seldom of their brother. They never expected to see much of him; they knew but little about him; and none of them were letter-writers.

Then all at once came the surprise Fate had in store.

A wealthy bachelor, looking about in his last moments for some one to whom might accrue an overplus which was troublesome because he did not choose to leave more to one branch of the family than another, bethought him of poor Lin Colvin's girls and their brother.

They were no relations, had no claim of any kind upon him. He rather liked that. He chuckled maliciously to think how angry his own folks would be if he tossed an odd twenty thousand outside of them all; and, hang it! why should he not? He had a right to do as he chose with his own.

The lad was drudging in a London office? Well, he would have to go on drudging; eight hundred a year wouldn't keep a family of four people in idleness—but it would keep them

together, and the poor things would be able to say 'Yah' into the faces of relations who, he heard, used them devilishly.

'Relations?'—he hated the very word. They were all fawning and sneaking round him now; but if he had been like poor Lionel Colvin—and Lionel was as good a fellow as ever lived, though he did make a fool of himself over his marriage—much he would have seen of their smirks and smiles.

It ended in his being quite eager to find out the exact sum which would divide into four for the Colvin young people.

After all, twenty thousand was not much; he almost wished it had been more.

It would be a nuisance to disturb other arrangements, or else—and then a happy thought occurred. There was a little house he had purchased for convenience's sake, to be in requisition whenever business necessitated his being in London. (Liverpool was his native place.)

He had bought and furnished comfortably 'The Nook,' for the sake of sleeping in peace o' nights away from the uproar of the vast, unfamiliar East End, while yet he could creep in at its back door, as it were, when morning came, without racketting through endless streets.

He had made The Nook a nice little place, and his old servant Simmins, married to a former cook, kept it aired and ready for occupation at any time.

The Nook was down in our testator's will as apportioned to a nephew whom he disliked, but who was the only one likely to keep it in his own hands. Anyone else getting the useless little place would most certainly sell it straight away. 'And poor Simmins would have to turn out;' reflected Simmins's master. Simmins had always recollected his little fancies in cooking and boot-cleaning, and warmed his bed at nights.

Accordingly he saddled Simmins on to The Nook with resolution, and rather pleased himself with imagining the nephew's face when he heard as much.

But now a better thought occurred. The nephew's face would be still more worth looking at if he got neither Nook nor Simmins.

Doubtless he had reckoned on the former; indeed, rumours to this effect were in circulation; and he fancied Simmins must have heard them. Poor Simmins was looking rather blue last time he was there.

By George! why not leave him and the place to the Colvin

boy? If the boy was like his dad he was a good sort. 'And never came kneeling down to me,' reflected the dying man, grimly.

Pop! The Nook came out of Mr. Nephew's share of the will, and was added to Lionel Colvin's, together with its adjunct.

Lionel was twenty-six years old when he heard the news.

He scarcely knew how to believe it. As for its seeming too good to be true, it seemed too good to be false; too good ever to have been thought of, dreamed of.

He sat down with his head between his hands, and the first feeling of which he was conscious (poor fellow! could he help it?) was, 'Oh, if this had happened sooner!'

Before they had all become what they were! Before they had got into their several grooves and become acclimatised thereto! While yet Bet and Poll and Georgie were supple and plastic, ready for the moulder's hand; while yet he was gay and light-hearted, hoping everything and fearing nothing from the future!

He was so young that he thought himself very old; and so great a change in his position and surroundings, such an upheaval of all things, was almost bewildering.

But the mood passed; and it needed only the frantic delight of the three who, untroubled by any misgivings or regrets, flew to him, rendered well-nigh incoherent by ecstasy, to evoke a sympathetic glow. He was greatly touched by their happiness.

It appeared, too, that the prospect of living with him counted for fully as much in their estimation as of *not* living any more with or upon others.

'We shall have a man of our own,' cried Georgie, feasting her eyes with the sight. 'A man to stand by us and stick up for us. We sha'n't be just "The Colvin girls" any longer. Oh, Lionel, *will* you sit at the bottom of the table and Bet at the top?'

'We will do anything you want, you know, Lionel,' subjoined Bet, more composedly. 'I know you have ideas about a house, and how things should be, and what's proper. And of course we have never had a chance. But if you tell us——'

She broke off with a wistful glance.

'Mayn't I have a bedroom to myself?' put forth Poll, who had never had this in her life. 'Ever so little a one, Lionel? I have always had to have a cupboard out of theirs; for those two like to be together; and I do so hate a cupboard without even a door of its own.'

'You will have to take what you can get.' Bet turned upon

her sister, brusquely. 'How is Lionel to know about it? He can't tell what rooms there are at The Nook.'

'But surely——'

'Be quiet, and don't tease.' The speaker, Bet, pushed her sister firmly to the rear. 'Don't you mind her' (to Lionel); 'I'll settle Poll. And I tell you it is quite likely you will get what you want' (turning again to the petitioner, with asperity), 'if you only wait and see. She has been worrying about it ever since she heard,' addressing her brother.

He smiled and nodded.

'There, you see, you're bullying him,' asserted the valiant Bet, drawing a breath and regarding the arbiter of fate with ill-concealed anxiety. In the past twenty-four hours her brother had appeared to her in a new light.

'He is not accustomed to us, and you girls are too much for any man. Lionel, we—don't mind us. We aren't really—we are just out of ourselves with joy. Oh, Lionel, you don't know; you don't know—'

To the surprise of all the voice broke, and Lionel's heart went out towards the weeper.

He got up hastily; they had pushed him into a chair the better to stand over him and pour out upon him; he now rose, and quickly kissed each sister, the one after the other.

'I'm awfully glad,' he said, in a low voice. 'Gladder even for you than for myself. We'll—be very happy. You shall have whatever you want.'

'Set your mind at rest about that room, Poll,' resumed he, in a gayer tone. 'It would need to be a very doll's house that couldn't find a room for a Poll,' laughing kindly; 'and I don't fancy The Nook is—I should say it has a very fair accommodation.' He had had an interview with the testator's lawyer, and learned all there was to tell. 'We four will go down and see the place at once; if you like, on Saturday afternoon.'

'Glorious!' from Georgie.

'And if it is all in working order, as I gather it is, then we might go into residence immediately. There is nothing to hinder us. By "immediately," I mean in about a month,' he added.

'A month!'

They had made up their minds that a week would be the outside limit to which patience need be stretched.

'Why, yes. Did you expect to move in to-morrow?' said Lionel, good-humouredly,

'But what is to hinder us?' To their unsophisticated minds there was nothing to do but to pack their trunks.

They listened, however, while his slow voice enumerated the various transactions necessitating delay, which can be easily understood by us, but proved so much Latin and Greek to them; and perhaps it was the first time they had ever listened to Lionel in their lives.

While children, it had been said in their hearing that they were cleverer than he; the heartless, shallow mother had been quicker-witted than her upright, commonplace husband; and though Bet had flouted the remark at the time, fiercely resentful on her brother's account, it had stuck by her.

She thought of it when Lionel made no mark at school, and was not sent on to either University.

'If there had been any chance of his doing anything——?' growled an uncle, with a heavy, frowning forehead. 'But there isn't. The boy had got to have some sort of education, or he would have been on our hands all his life; but he has had enough for all the good that's likely to come of it. Pitch him into the City, and let him find a living there, as others do.'

'A pity one of the girls isn't the boy, eh?' suggested a companion.

'Of course. Always the way. But, unless they are to go governessing, education is wasted on girls. And their mother's swagger relations would make a fine din if anything of the useful kind were suggested, I can tell you; though it is hard enough work to wring a sixpence out of them to help with the maintenance. Much good it has done the lot having an "Honourable" for their mother, when she skinned their father of every farthing while she lived, and left them paupers on the hands of his people when she died!'

'She managed to live in style herself, too.'

'Oh, style? She was clever enough for anything.'

'I fancy the girls take after her.'

'Heaven forbid!'

Bet heard every word of the above conversation, the latter portion of which did not interest her; but she never forgot that it was a pity one of the girls was not the boy, and for a long time afterwards despised Lionel.

As years passed, however, the very intelligence which had been commented upon, enabled her to perceive that in this she, as well as those from whom she took her cue, was mistaken. In

the matter of showy, superficial abilities indeed, her brother was deficient. Moreover, he lacked the energy, acumen, and self-reliance invaluable to the success of a business man; but on the other hand, he had a stubborn and unassailable originality of mind. He thought out his own life, trod his own path, and settled with himself every point that admitted of debate.

Bet sometimes found herself wondering at him.

And again she would be provoked with him. Why did he not fling in their teeth the charges of his detractors? They were detractors: she was sure of that. Then why did Lionel not vindicate himself, assert himself?

She did not know the utter impossibility of what she demanded.

Now, however, a new era was beginning, and she recognised with a throb of pleasure a hitherto unknown ring in her brother's voice.

Often he had mutely disagreed with things his sisters said—she knew it by his face and the troubled, rigid look in his eyes—but he had seldom, if ever, adventured a correction.

To-day he succeeded in making all three hang upon his words. She could hardly believe it was Lionel.

At the close of the interview he rose and looked round.

'This is what I never expected,' said he; 'and I say, don't you think?—you, Bet and Poll, at least can remember our father?' (they assented)—'this that has happened to us is for *his sake*,' said Lionel, holding his hat in front of him and looking into it; 'because he was—a good man and lived a good life. Don't let us ever forget it. We have got a chance now to show we are *his children*, and, and——'

'Oh, we mean to be as happy as the day is long,' cried Georgie.

But this was not quite what her brother meant.

To do them justice however, the girls carried their resolution into effect, and were as merry as larks in their new home.

It was a snug little nest, just off the high road, closely sheltered by woods behind; and they were as well content with it, and with their one lazy, untidy manservant (the bequeathed Simmins), and their one rough little pony (yclept Solon), as if each had been the noblest scion of his race.

Simmins just suited them; they would have been oppressed by a smarter, more orderly and methodical servant. Simmins, shuffling about in heel-less slippers and grimy neckcloth, meant that they might be shuffly and dirty too. They liked this, alack!

They never wanted to wear their good clothes or dress their hair nicely, unless there were a prospect of being on view.

Once Lionel, who was always neat and clean, taking after his father as usual—and the little colonel had been the neatest of men—took upon himself, in his new-found authority, to remonstrate.

The girls stared; what on earth did he mean? They were not going to see anyone. It was all very well for him: he was going among people; and they would be all right, too, when they were among people; but when they were only at home, and no one came near them? They could not understand.

Nor would he say all he thought for very tenderness of compassion. The poor girls—he always thought of them as ‘the poor girls’—had suffered in the wars of a long, unlovely childhood, and who could wonder that it had left its mark?

If only they would try to efface the mark! They were clever enough; at least, Bet and Georgie were, and Poll as a rule followed their lead; but he could not open their eyes.

On beginning the new life he had suggested a fresh start all round, vaguely hinting at ignorance and inexperience; but had been shouted at. Would they not like to—to take lessons—privately—in—in——?

‘In what?’ Bet had demanded, suspicious of trepidation and stammering. ‘What do you want us to learn?’

He could not answer ‘Everything. You know nothing, or next to nothing. You are deficient in the veriest rudiments of knowledge.’ He could only stammer afresh. ‘Suppose you get someone down to—to teach you——’

‘But what?’ reiterated she.

‘Your education has been grossly neglected.’ At length he did find courage to speak plainly. ‘In your place I should do for myself what no one else has had the kindness——’ He could see her start and flush.

‘Kindness!’ She echoed the word.

‘They let you grow up as it is shameful our parents’ children should have grown,’ proceeded Lionel, himself colouring as she coloured. ‘It is not your fault.’

‘Rather not!’

‘But now that things are different, and you are not yet too old——’

‘Do you happen to know what my age is?’ By this time Bet was angry. ‘I am twenty-two, and you wish me to go back

to the school-room ! I have not opened a lesson-book for years.'

('Nor any other kind of book,' thought he, ruefully.)

'And I don't mean to. I can see as well as you do that we aren't accomplished, cultivated young ladies. I doubt if we ever should have been. Our mother wasn't, and they say we take after her. But she got along without, and so do we. Lionel, it's no use;' as he appeared likely to lift up his voice again. 'I assure you it is no use,' said Bet, more gently; 'I know you mean well, and it vexes you that we are not up to your mark; but the truth is I did not think of it, of trying something of the sort, and I simply felt I *couldn't*; none of us could. We might begin, and then we should want to break off immediately; it isn't in us to care for books and study, and music and drawing, and all the rest of it. And besides——': she paused.

'Well?'

'All the people I have ever known who were charming and accomplished were odious,' said she, shortly.

'They are not all the people in the world.'

'I don't know. The people in this neighbourhood aren't much.'

'At least, you would not like them to look down upon you.' But he felt this was a poor and worthless argument, of no value even in his own eyes, and easily disposed of by her nimbler tongue.

Look down on them? *That* no one should do. Look down? Who would look down? 'Whatever we may be in ourselves, we have better blood in our veins than any single soul about us,' cried she, the fire flashing in her eyes. Then, suddenly pulling up, 'Of course, I don't mean Lady Blanche Massitur; but she is never likely to come our way, and I suppose will never know that we are the only girls in this benighted region who might have been fit to consort with her niece; but as for the rest, the Farrell crew, with their airs of superiority——'

'Oh, I'm not very keen on them myself,' said Lionel, laughing.

CHAPTER V.

SISTERS-IN-LAW.

So the funny thing was, that while the Colvins were not 'very keen' on the Farrells, and the Farrells, speaking through the mouthpiece of Thomas, who knew the beat of the family pulse pretty accurately, decided that the Colvin girls, pretty and lively as they were, were not 'Billy's style,' a meeting with deadly intent on both sides was being arranged, and that eligible bachelor, Mr. William Farrell, was to be no longer allowed to rove at large.

'I wash my hands of him, however,' said Thomas. 'Anyone who can, may marry brother Bill for me. He never says "No"; he agrees to everything; but he gets no further.'

'Oh, we shall see;' said Mrs. Tom.

'I daresay; I daresay you think you can tackle him. All I say is "Try." You know what I think;' portentously. 'Well, I went at Bill, as I said I should, this morning'—(we are recurring to the birthday night)—'I said to him, "Can't ye do anything? Stir about;"—and all he did was to repeat "Stir about?" as if the phrase amused him.'

'Perhaps it did, Thomas.'

'I told him to go among the girls; to talk to 'em; make up to 'em. Said I, "Nothing more easy, once you begin"—(he was by way of being something of a lady's heavy-weight man himself, liking to be busy among the petticoats, joking and chaffing, when he came up to the drawing-room after dinner)—'and what d'ye think I got for it? "You are more of a talker than I," said Bill.'

'I don't think dear William *is* much of a talker, Thomas.'

'Humph; he gets on without it, then. He has a way of his own with the women. There are one or two who, if I'm not mistaken, look a little blue when Billy's name is mentioned. Would you call him good-looking?' he demanded, suddenly.

On this head Mrs. Tom had a good deal to say. For the world she would not have allowed that dear William was not good-looking; at the same time he was perhaps—perhaps he was more prepossessing, agreeable——

'He has a pair of extraordinarily keen eyes, you know;' struck

in her husband. 'And I'll be bound he works them at close quarters. But if he hasn't a tongue——'

'But he has when—when alone with me,' blushed Mrs. Tom, feeling almost improper and quite youthful.

Whereupon Thomas rallied her again; and presently she told herself that it really would be best to embark on the Colvin campaign forthwith, and started off the following day—with what result we know.

Successful so far, it now behoved her to be diplomatic, and guard against the mistake of showing her hand too plainly; to which end the luncheon party must be made to extend its borders. It would never do to have the Misses Colvin, who were as yet only on terms of ceremony at Beech Hall, arriving there at the appointed hour, to find only herself and her brother-in-law.

That would be too glaring, too blatant. She hastily resolved to invite a few requisite unobjectionables; wherefore we must now catch up with her still driving through wind and rain, with fat Coachy's back still humped in wrathful misery on the box, to the house whence one of these is to be drawn.

Westlands is a Farrell residence we may be sure, from the very moment we enter its well-ordered precincts.

They have not possibly attained to the high pitch of perfection which distinguishes the Thomas Farrells' immaculate domain; for they are newer, and here and there is room for development and maturity; but then Mr. and Mrs. Charles Farrell have only been married a couple of years, and the place has got to grow along with them.

Anyhow it is a broad, well-trimmed approach up which the big carriage rolls, and a handsome residence, beneath whose stone portico Mrs. Tom alights—far more comfortably than she did at the Colvins' windy front door, when Joseph sought in vain to shelter her beneath an umbrella, which flapped, and rattled, and strenuously sought to poke her in the eye.

Joseph hops back to his perch with alacrity now. He has a friend at court in this house; and the Colvins' cook was grumpy, and did not suggest his stepping indoors, though he aired himself in the rain before her windows.

Away trot the horses to the stables—it is Mrs. Tom's way always to send them off stablewards whenever she makes calls on wet days—so even surly John heaves a sigh of satisfaction at last, saying to himself that everything will be right this time. The Colvins' small, musty, and draughty stables, already

furnished with Solon in possession, had been so uninviting that he had remained in the yard with his back humped more than ever while Mrs. Tom made her long and affectionate call, poor Simmins's beer and flatteries only eliciting the barest tolerance in return; but he does not care, not he, if he is taken to Westlands every day of the week. And his missis may sit as long as the old gal chooses to. 'The Chawleses,' he pronounces sententiously, 'bein' all the same as ourselves.'

He is a Farrell in everything but name, you see; and finds nothing truly good outside the Farrell limits; neither food nor drink nor company worthy of consideration, that is not of Farrell manufacture.

So Mrs. Tom is graciously permitted to visit Mrs. Charles, and to understand that the road between the houses is in good condition all the year round; and as dear Emma is Priscilla's own creation, so to speak, imported into the family under conditions to be presently narrated, it follows that she seldom goes any distance from her own door without popping in, sooner or later, upon her sister-in-law.

But we must have a word about this sister-in-law.

Mrs. Charles Farrell, otherwise 'dear Emma,' was nothing if not grateful; and how sedulously she cultivated that virtue, how often she patted herself on the back for it, need not concern us.

In the main it was a genuine product. She knew what she was, and she knew what she had been; and there were occasions on which she told herself almost with tears that it was Mrs. Tom—her kind, good, generous sister-in-law, Mrs. Tom—who had pulled her out of the mud (respectable enough mud, but mud all the same), and that she ought never, never to forget such a deed of daring. This was Emma at her best.

In other moods, the cunning little woman who was never quite sure of her feet in those golden slippers which now encased them, would school her rebellious emotions by other means. What mattered it if Priscilla were interfering and domineering? Without Priscilla's countenance and patronage, life among the Farrells would be well-nigh unendurable. On the other hand, with Priscilla to stand by her, she could force even the Stephen Farrells, the most difficult members of the whole connection, to behave decently.

There had been an outcry at her marriage; that, she well knew. Letters had passed which were not for her to see. Thomas, at the foot of the dinner-table, had glanced meaningly towards

Priscilla at the head; and his eyebrows had gone up as he read two or three closely-written pages; while the missive had been shuffled into his pocket presently amidst 'Humphs!' and mutterings.

Oh, she had seen it all and understood. A poor, half-educated little nursery governess to be foisted into the great family of the Farrells! Did she not herself know that such a deed had only become possible because brother Charles was casting hither and thither in search of a wife? And did she not suspect he had cast in vain very shortly before she appeared on the scene?

And there were times when she was not invited to go down, though a Farrell carriage stood at the door. That also she understood.

When the wedding-day actually arrived, however, to her secret surprise and satisfaction the bridegroom's relations turned up, to a man and woman; Mrs. Tom had been too much for them collectively and severally.

The power that could thus compel at a supreme moment might well be relied on to go on compelling: and by no slip of the tongue or pen, neither by word nor look, neither by speech nor silence, must the faintest suspicion ever escape that could transmit to Farrells who, in whatever else they differed, were united in loyalty to Mrs. Tom, that her *protégée*, who as her *protégée* alone was tolerated, did not cling to the very hem of her skirt.

Emma could not speak fervently enough of her fondness for Priscilla. She could see no fault in her; none. She thought it no wonder that Charles had wanted to—oh, yes; she knew all about that. The only wonder was that Charles should ever have dreamed that she, such a poor, little, insignificant mite as she, and in such a *humble* position, too, could be a worthy successor to the place in his affections! But then Priscilla had been so kind; so very kind.

'She told you about Charles, did she?' said Mrs. Stephen Farrell, brusquely.

'We are such friends;' murmured the bride. It was in the days of her bridehood.

Mrs. Stephen went away laughing. She was fond of Mrs. Tom, but sometimes Mrs. Tom made her laugh very much indeed.

One and all agreed however, that though it was rather too bad of that lady to betray secrets to a person so much concerned, there appeared to be no harm done; and certainly it was very

right and proper and becoming in the narrator to be so devoted and enthusiastic. 'Of course she ought to worship Priscilla.' It never occurred to them to think that a little of the worship might have been got up laundry fashion, frilled and goffered for the occasion.

Besides all this, Emma had a use for her patroness, who, if valuable in one capacity, was absolutely indispensable in another. The depths of ignorance on social questions which hampered our rich man's newly-made wife were known only to herself. She was not by any means so stupid—Mrs. Tom would have said 'simple'—as the latter thought; she was quite cunning enough to hide one species of ignorance under the veil of another; and this in itself was a proof of no mean capacity.

For instance. 'On account of our poverty, dear,' she would murmur in soft, piteous accents, 'we had to live so quietly, you know. My parents indeed took us nowhere; and I had seen nothing of the world till I came to your beautiful, delightful home—that is to say'—hastily mindful that Priscilla knew a thing or two, 'I had only looked at it out of the schoolroom window. It was a great trial to my dear parents.'

And who was to know that the dear parents were a vulgar old couple, living quite as comfortably as they had ever been accustomed to do, with a large acquaintance among all the little jerry-built semi-detached villas contiguous to their own; and that it was considered a piece of real luck by them, when the one pretty daughter they had took the fancy of a rich widow with a solitary chick, and was carried off and provided for as its first instructress?

According to Emma, the hardy old campaigners were a refined, pathetic pair, gracefully accepting their descent in life; resigned indeed to the loss of society and luxury on their own account, but never quite able to keep from lamenting the lot of their dear, unfortunate children.

N.B.—They did not turn up at the wedding; she took care of that.

'We never saw anything of what goes on in great houses.' She would not adventure further. She thus learned what she wished to know.

And she knew that she had a great deal to learn. The most ordinary dinner-party kept her on the strain from beginning to end, wondering and watching. At Beech Hall she had grown accustomed to good dinners, with much food and careful attend-

ance—but she could glean no information from them on sundry points of etiquette which worried her.

She desired to be a Farrell, and no Farrell was complete without a full equipment of self-importance and self-reliance. It was, therefore, necessary to know if she were important enough, impressive enough, received enough attention, and above all were given her proper place, when she and Charles dined out in the neighbourhood? Of Priscilla alone could this be asked.

Priscilla knew if she ought to be satisfied or discontented? Priscilla would tell her if such and such an anecdote had any disagreeable under-meaning? Was there any affront to the ex-governess conveyed? 'For you know, dear, I never forget what I was.' Emma would revert to pristine meekness at this juncture, though but a minute before Mrs. Charles Farrell had been considerably red in the face, looking by no means meek.

But Mrs. Tom was no Job's comforter. On the contrary, she was the most consoling auditor imaginable, for she never deemed an affront to a Farrell within the lines of possibility. It was only dear Emma who was too sensitive—and no one ever finds fault with being called too sensitive.

'So you really think it meant nothing, dear Priscilla?'

'Absolutely nothing, dear Emma.'

Oh, what a comfort Mrs. Tom was!

To see her sponsor step in, when the room was full of Farrells; all laughing, talking, knowing each other, and cognisant of each other's affairs; all grouping familiarly, or accosting with confidence groups already formed—was to our luckless outsider, only just a Farrell and no more, like the breaking out of the sun in a wintry sky.

She had been spoken to perhaps; attended to with formal civility; and ceremoniously provided with a seat—but where she sat, there was she expected to sit. As for running about from one to another, linking her hand in a Farrell's arm, or tapping a Farrell's shoulder—a family habit at family gatherings—she knew better than to attempt anything of the kind. It was not till Priscilla took the floor, that Priscilla's humble hench-woman would have any of the real fun of the fair.

Nor was Emma's pink-and-whiteness—rather cheap pink-and-whiteness, but good enough to have been vaunted liberally had it belonged to any creditable member of the family—of much avail to her as it was.

It had caught Charles. To his casual remark, 'That's a pretty

little creature you have got for a 'governess,' was due all that followed in the busy brain of his sister-in-law, resulting in the grand *finale*; but no one else seemed to think now, that it mattered a pin-point whether Mrs. Charles were looking her very best or her very worst.

She would dress her hair—abundant hair, of a light, showy hue—in the newest fashion, pleasing herself mightily by reason of no one else in the neighbourhood's having discovered the same, and would look anxiously about for the effect. Afterwards she had petulantly to own that she might as well have worn a wig.

She imported her hats from Paris. The Farrells continued to wear their old ones contentedly in her presence.

Sometimes she would try a ruse. 'I don't like this style;' pointing to a new shape in her frock; 'my dressmaker would declare it suits my figure, but *I* don't think so.' The cousins coldly admired; there was no impression, no envy.

To each other they allowed that she had a good complexion and correct features, though her eyes were poor. But they never exclaimed, 'How well you are looking, dear Emma!' Indeed, it was only Mrs. Tom who bravely, undauntedly, and persistently called her 'dear Emma' at all.

Enter Priscilla, beaming as usual. 'Well, dear Emma——?' But, good Heavens! what was dear Emma doing?

As a rule, the drawing-room at Westlands was the drawing-room upon the threshold of which the august sister-in-law might appear at any moment. But a wet day is a slack day, and 'She will never come in this downpour' had been decided early in the afternoon; whereupon Emma had set about to enjoy herself.

First of all, she opened a packet of sweets; in her governess days sweets had been her chief consolation, peppermint her favourite flavour; and it was nothing more or less than those commonest of the common 'Bull's-eyes,' well known to every village child, which she was now munching and scrunching as she sat on the hearth-rug in front of a huge fire, to the eyes of the neat and precise Mrs. Tom only half-dressed.

Her coat-bodice was certainly off, and as certainly was it not intended to be off—in public. Snippings and frillings bestrewed the floor, and an open fashion-book which had a rakish effect—though why, it was difficult to say—had evidently flopped off the chair on to which it had been thrown, and lay where it had fallen.

'Well, dear Emma?'

Up bounced the disorderly little figure.

'Oh, dear!' cried Mrs. Tom, trying to be only arch.

Had she been in any other house—but she would not allow herself to think of what she would have felt in any other house. In the present instance there must be some reason, some good, all-sufficient reason—she looked almost imploringly at Emma to supply it.

'Priscilla!' An extra large 'Bull's-eye,' only just begun and not to be disposed of, precluded further utterance.

'You naughty girl!' said Mrs. Tom, playfully. 'You will spoil your teeth, Emma.'

She helped Emma on with her coat; picked up divers of the shreds and snippings with her own gloved fingers; and seated herself serenely in the chair from which the *Bon Marché* pattern-book had toppled on to the floor.

By which time Emma had in a measure recovered. It appeared that she loved to look at pattern-books; that in old days she had been obliged to do her own dressmaking. 'You know, dear, how poor we were' (humility was always a safe 'draw' with Mrs. Tom); 'and Maggie is so tiresome if I ask her to attend to my things. She thinks she ought to see to baby only. So I just thought I would try what I could do; for there is such a lovely "front" here;' gradually the delinquent stammered herself into smoother waters;—'and so I took off my coat for a moment—really, only for a single moment—to measure from here to here' (indicating). 'I could not possibly measure with it on. And I have so many odds and ends, it seemed such a good use for them. You know I don't wish to be extravagant, considering that I brought dear Charles nothing.'

She did 'not wish to be extravagant'? That was enough.

The beam in Mrs. Tom's beclouded eyes shone forth again. Good Emma, so wise and prudent! Such a dear, little, pains-taking, economical Emma! To think of her struggling all alone with a book of fashion-plates! French fashion-plates, too! And all because she would not take up nurse's time; would not usurp one iota of the dear baby's claim on nurse's attention!

By degrees this was how the story presented itself to the charmed Priscilla's mind, and even the flying ends of ribbon and frayings of silk assumed airs of injured innocence as they were being hustled out of sight.

Emma continued to talk, deftly picking and whisking about. She was now pushing a footstool into place. 'Some of the things

are quite ridiculous.' It was the fire-screen next. 'Of course shops do make the most enormous profits.' She cast her eyes round; the corner of the hearthrug was turned up. 'And when one can make the things for next to nothing, and when you have actually got the things, so that you don't need to buy them——'

'Certainly,' said Priscilla.

If there were a virtue dearer to Priscilla's heart than another it was economy.

We scarcely like to hint of so excellent a woman that she was parsimonious, but it is a fact that she ill-liked to part with a penny; and that whereas it was the joy of Emma's life to spend, it was only when the dignity of the Farrells demanded the sacrifice of all lesser considerations that Mrs. Tom could bring herself to open her purse-strings.

In her secret soul she was sometimes a trifle doubtful of Emma on this point; and the sly little fox knew this, and was sharp enough to see that now the tide had turned, and was running full in her favour, from the very way in which Priscilla handled the fashion-book.

'Do, dear Priscilla, look at these laces.' She seized the book and turned the pages rapidly. 'Such sweet lace collarettes, and so simple. There is one that would just suit you. There!' triumphantly pointing it out, 'I said to myself directly I saw it, "That would just suit Priscilla." And of course I had no idea of your looking in this afternoon;' appended she, as proving incontestably the good faith of the statement.

It all told. 'Did you, indeed, Emma?' Mrs. Tom, with her head first on one side and then on the other, scrutinised the sweet and simple—to her mind, alarmingly fashionable and expensive arrangement. She was, however, but a woman. 'Did you—did you say you thought it would suit me?' she resumed, her eyes glued to the page.

'Suit you exactly. And it would be so useful. You could put it on over a morning dress when you did not care to change for dinner.'

'But I always do change for dinner.' Mrs. Tom drew herself up a little.

'I know you do. So do I;' eagerly. She would not have let out for the world that there were nights, when there was no one but Charles to see, when she had not exactly—not exactly—. But then she had felt poorly, and Priscilla was never poorly. There was no need to raise the question with Priscilla.

'I only thought that occasionally a pretty lace fichu would look quite dressy, supposing you had already on a good silk—and you do wear such handsome silks!' A glance of admiration was not wasted. 'On Sundays, you know. I don't think you dress on Sunday evenings?' with a lucky thought.

No; Priscilla never dressed on Sunday evenings.

She looked, however, dubiously at the fichu. It was pretty; but, dear me! would it not be rather a queer apparition at Beech Hall Sunday supper: a plain, plentiful meal, shorn of all ornament, and even restricted as to plates and knives?

The fichu would expect something different.

She shut the book.

'It is intended really for afternoon wear,' insinuated Emma, who had been busy with a mental scheme. 'What I thought was that if we two could join together and send for a few of these—there are one or two little things, quite cheap little things, that would be useful to me—we could have the whole parcel sent carriage free. That is the understanding,' nodding to emphasise; 'any orders over a pound are sent carriage free. But don't let that bias you, dear Priscilla;' hastily.

She was now quite sure how the affair would end. And when the parcel arrived, and Mrs. Tom's purchase proved to be even prettier in reality than in the pattern-book, and was tried on by Emma and pinned and pinched to fit, there was no doubt that the latter had secured a point. Priscilla wore that fichu till it was grimy, and limp, and almost unrecognisable.

It was her beautiful Paris lace fichu, she said, long after fichus were out of date altogether.

To return. The ladies, now in the best of humours with each other and themselves—for when women are hand in glove over clothes they experience a kind of glow at the heart which communicates electric sparks from each to each—Priscilla and Emma, we say, having discussed and decided, rang for tea.

Even here luck was on the side of the latter; tea walked in as she touched the bell. 'I see you are as punctual as we are,' exclaimed Mrs. Tom, drawing up to the table, delighted.

Now Emma was the most unpunctual of mortals. She had hated the measured hours of her schoolroom existence; loathed the necessity for starting and leaving off as the clock struck (a fad of the widow's, who took care that it was adhered to); and vowed when she had a house of her own she would eat and drink, go in and out as she chose. Her husband had often finished his

soup ere she appeared at dinner, and was leaving the house when she came down, if come down she did, to breakfast.

But she knew he would not tell tales, and demure to a degree she looked now.

'The provoking thing is that she takes in Priscilla at every turn,' quoth cousin Matilda (the Mrs. Stephen Farrell before-mentioned). 'That despicable little upstart, who has more wits in her little finger than poor dear Priscilla in her whole body, cringes and clings, and Priscilla thinks she is all that is helpless and teachable; whereas she is getting her own way in everything. Priscilla is as true as steel. She has her faults; we can all see them; she could not hide them if she would; and I believe,' added the speaker, laughing, but kindly—because all the Farrells spoke of Priscilla kindly—'I believe she would not if she could. She is sincerity itself. But I cannot stand Charles Farrell's little underbred wife; and the only real fault I have ever had to find with Mrs. Tom is that we owe the marriage to her.'

'You think she is really fond of Mrs. Charles?' was once asked.

'I think whatever Mrs. Tom *is* she *really* is,' said Mrs. Stephen, curtly; after a moment she added, 'It might have been different had it not been one of ourselves'; whereat her companion smiled inwardly, for people did say that, next to Priscilla, there was no more staunch upholder of the faith as it is held by Farrells than the speaker.

'Have you seen anything of cousin Matilda lately?' now inquired Mrs. Tom over her tea.

Emma had seen cousin Matilda the day before; had met her in the station, looking so well; very busy, as usual; had been shopping in Town.

Emma was safe in saying it all. As a fact, she had beheld the stout, velvet-cloaked figure alight from a down train, and a footman dive into the compartment from which his mistress had emerged, to issue therefrom presently laden with parcels.

Furthermore, she had received a passing salutation; a nod, and 'How cold!' as the party hurried along.

'Did she say anything about Thursday?' inquired Mrs. Tom.

'No,' said Emma, thoughtfully. 'No,' shaking her head with decision, 'I don't think—indeed, I am nearly sure she did not.' (She might have been quite sure; Mrs. Stephen had not vouchsafed a single word beyond the 'How cold!' of dire necessity.)

'She is coming to lunch with me on Thursday. The Colvin girls are coming too. And if you——'

'Oh, I shall be delighted,' said Emma; and she was delighted.

It was a little thing, but it meant a great deal. It meant that she had been elected as a representative at a Farrell council; that the council was to be held at the house of the chairwoman, Mrs. Tom; and that the subject under discussion was the eligibility of a candidate for family honours in the person of one of the Misses Colvin.

It may be asked, How in the world did she think of all this, and from what sources of information had it been deduced?

First of all, then, Emma knew that Billy was a marked man. That was common property. Charles settled and done with, all within the radius of Mrs. Tom were aware that she had taken the next brother's concerns into her hands in deadly earnest, and that he was no longer to be permitted to run free, sheltered by the former's more pressing necessity.

Then there had come the false cast, when the Brown family were all in all, and Jane, who was now about to be someone else's Jane, had very nearly been 'dear Jane.'

Now the Browns were nowhere, and the Colvin girls had come to the front.

So much established, the rest was easy. A few loose observations—a remark on Bet's figure and Poll's complexion—eliminated them; when there only remained Miss Georgie.

'To my mind the youngest is so much the most attractive,' said Mrs. Charles, languidly sipping her tea, 'that I cannot understand the elder ones being more admired.'

Keen as a feeding fish, Mrs. Tom almost jumped over the bait in her eagerness to take it.

'So I think, Emma; I think as you do, exactly. Perhaps the other two may be handsomer—I don't know—but Georgie!' ('Georgie' already!) 'There is something so bright and merry about her; something so attractive, as *you* say, that——'

'That I wonder what the men are about.'

'Hum!'

CHAPTER VI.

'LORD UMFREVILLE'S GRANDDAUGHTERS.'

'It certainly is rather strange,' said Miss Colvin, reflectively, 'that though we all know Billy so well by sight, only Poll has ever had speech of him.'

'And stranger still,' added Georgie, 'that Poll was allowed to have that. As a rule, whenever we are in dear William's neighbourhood Mrs. Tom mounts guard, and dares us to do our worst.'

'Poll,' said Bet, 'think over Billy. Was there *anything* to be made of him? Was he—did he—had you any fun out of him at all?'

Poll however was reticent on the subject. 'I don't know what you mean by "fun,"' said she. 'And I told you at the time all there was to tell; and you said you didn't care to hear.'

'Because we do so bar those Farrells. But,' said Georgie, candidly, 'if they are going to take us up, of course that alters the question. I'm not proud. Bet is; but even Bet owns that it is a triumph to have brought Mrs. Tom to her bearings. And it must be Billy's doing. He has been Billy-ing after us in his poor, fond, fluttering heart, and——'

'I think you are wrong there,' struck in her elder sister. 'I don't believe it is his doing at all. Don't we know that Mrs. Tom rules the roast all round the Farrell dominions? If I did not think that, I should not go to Beech Hall. I don't want Billy; but I should not mind being on a little more intimate terms with the Farrells generally. We have got to live among them; so we may as well go to their parties and things.'

'Well, but don't let us get off Billy till we have settled something,' said Georgie, impatiently. 'If Poll would only give us a help?'

Poll, however, had but one idea. She had been snubbed before, when quite willing, indeed rather anxious, to relate her unique experience, and she was not going to have it now pumped out of her. 'You said you didn't care to hear,' she repeated obstinately.

'Neither we did—then. But we do now. Of course we had never thought of this; we only thought of him as a fool of a creature——'

'I told you at the time that he was not a fool.'

'Then his looks belie him. But never mind, we'll take your word for it,' winking surreptitiously to Bet. 'We'll start on the understanding that Billy is not such a fool as he looks.'

'He is not a fool at all.'

'Not a fool at all. Just so,' said Bet gravely, though her eyes flashed answering signals to the irrepressible Georgie, who was obviously on the verge of contradiction and discussion such as might prove fatal to any further admissions on the part of the only person present capable of making them. 'Of course Poll knows, Georgie. She had him for a whole dinner. Come, Pollkins, be good-natured; you see, Billy does not *look* much, and we could not tell that—that—'

'As you did not speak to him, I don't see how you could tell anything.'

'That's it. Just what I am saying. So now——?'

'What do you want to know?'—reluctantly.

'Why, what you talked about; what he said; and anything else.'

'He talked very well indeed. He was a great deal more amusing than the man on my other hand.'

'Amusing!' cried Georgie, with an affected start. Then, warned by Bet's gravity, 'Amusing, dear Poll? Ye-es—oh, yes; amusing. Oh, certainly!'—gulping down a giggle in her throat.

'Of course amusing,' said Bet, severely. 'Why not? Many men can be quite pleasant and—and amusing, who don't look it. Go on, Pollkins; nodding encouragement.'

'He told me a good deal about himself,' proceeded Poll, disarmed at last, and enjoying an importance which did not often fall to her lot. 'He lives in London. At the other end of London. And spends most of his time at his club.'

'Billy! A club!' But Bet pinched the interrupter to beware.

'He is in partnership with the other brothers; and he and Charles used to live together before Charles's marriage. That's the way they all do, he says. Live at home somewhere down here till their parents die; then take rooms for themselves in London; then come back here when they marry.'

'When they marry. Oh, yes! And which of them are there left to marry now?'

'Only himself, he said.'

'Golly!' A breathless whisper from Georgie, while even Bet looked as if something startling had been said. Poll surveyed

her sisters with the calm dignity of a narrator who alone holds the threads of discourse.

'You are doing very well, my dear.' The elder sister shook herself together, and drew a step nearer. 'You are remembering splendidly. Now remember some more. Was there anything about us? Did he seem to know anything about us? Or to care — ? Or — ?'

'Oh, I think he knows us by sight. He asked if you weren't you? And how we liked the neighbourhood? And if Lionel wasn't on the Stock Exchange?'

'Did he wonder he did not meet us oftener, considering we have been here for nearly half a year?'

'Said nothing about that.' Poll shook her head decidedly. 'I don't think he is much here himself.'

'He is, though. I often see him on the road. I thought he must know us by sight,' observed Bet, with complacency.

'So now he will have to take off his hat and show the bald place;' said Georgie, feeling that her tongue might be loosened at last. All that Poll had to tell was obviously told, and she was bursting with self-repression. 'Now that he is to be allowed to *Bill* and coo'—laughing. 'Poll, when you knew all this, why would you not go down to Mrs. Tom yesterday?'

'Why should I? You and Bet went. And you can go in for Billy, too, if you choose. Because a man is not an utter idiot——'

'Only, you see, we have always thought him an utter idiot.'

Poll looked from one to the other. 'You try,' she said, grimly; and with the words shut up the book on her lap, slid off the window-seat where she had been sitting, and presently left the room.

'Billy-ho!' called Georgie after her; then threw herself into a chair and burst into inextinguishable laughter.

Eventually Poll decided to go to the luncheon party. The day was mild, she wanted a walk, and she had nothing else to do.

'All very fine;' quoth Georgie, when so much was explained. 'No apologies necessary. I have no objection; none in the world; no more has Bet. "Come one, come all," I say. "But just this: hearken all ye who enter for the Billy Handicap; it's to be fair running, and no tricks all round.'

'No tricks?' said Bet.

'Oh, you are all right. But, Poll—you hear, Miss Poll?—none of your little games. Oh, you know what I mean; you

know what "little games" are, and how to play them, too. Now, Bet and I are awfully straight. Yes, we are. Bet is an old stager, and I am only a three-year-old; but we run alike, and we each run straight as a die; while my dear, innocent Pollkins occasionally skids a bit.'

'There, now, that's the worst;,' continued the speaker, patting the affronted Poll soothingly. 'Only "occasionally," and only "a bit." We are not such a bad lot as people make out; and if the Farrells will kindly give us a lick of their whitewash—if we can only say that we have had the Billy-goat bleating after us——'

'You are too ridiculous,' said Poll, angrily. And she shook off her sister's hand and, muttering, left the room.

Georgie, scared, turned to look at Bet. 'She always bolts now whenever we get to Billy-talk. Bet, can she really?—it would be so extraordinary; or is it only that Poll has never had a proposal, and does not like to be behind you and me? You know she was very cross when Bertie Jacobson turned out to be mine, though she said he was only a dirty little Jew boy. But she never likes your having had two. And somehow, I can't help thinking she is going to try whether she can't run in Billy, so as to be even with *me* at any rate.'

'I don't think Poll would do that.'

'Well, perhaps not,' said Georgie, relenting.

'You see,' said her sister after a while, 'there is this to be said for Billy: we have laughed at him till we really scarcely know what is Billy and what is not. Poll did say he talked well enough, and was quite pleasant. Neither you nor I know anything whatever of him but his looks——'

'They are enough for me.'

'So they are for me. If there is a thing I detest, it is a pointed beard on a pointed chin, with pink lips shining through. Still, you know, though we may laugh at him, and make game of him, I believe,' soberly, 'I believe some people would call Billy good-looking.'

'No!'

'They would. Oh yes; they would. He has the kind of look of an old picture——'

'Well, I always think those old pictures make the most hideous men.'

'You mean that the old men make the pictures hideous,' corrected Bet, thinking of Lionel and his educational fervour. 'Do try and not be so slipshod. I am always telling you.'

'I am not slipshod. I said what I meant;' sturdily. 'I meant the old pictures, not the old men at all; I don't care what the old men are like; it's the young men in the old pictures that are such nincompoops—the saints, you know.'

'I tell you not to speak like that,' said Bet, loudly. 'It's—it's very wrong. You know it is'—frowning and shocked—'to call the saints nincompoops.'

'I didn't. I said their pictures were. And they are. And Billy is like them. You say yourself he is. So there!'

'I didn't say it as being anything against Billy,' said Bet, settling her share of the irreverence. 'I said it rather for him than against him. Whatever *we* may think, the painters meant to make good-looking men; and I know Mrs. Tom thinks Billy perfectly beautiful. She said something once about his eyes; and so I took a good look at them in church, just to see if she could possibly be in earnest; for you can't believe a word Mrs. Tom says about any one of them—every Farrell is perfection, of course—but I had to own Billy's eyes were rather good of the kind.'

'Poll said so, don't you remember? It was the one thing she told us about that dinner-party. We laughed at her; so she turned rusty, and we heard no more.'

'For myself, I think Billy *is* hideous,' meditated Bet. 'His high, narrow forehead, and hatchet face, and thin nose——'

'You know, it is rather a good nose, Bet.'

Both the sisters laughed.

'We go on detesting him, and thinking him hideous, and all the time allowing him this, and allowing him that,' began Bet again, merrily. 'I wonder what it is that goes against the grain in Billy's face? Even the lips!—oh, I can't tell you how I dislike them!' she broke off, shuddering. 'And yet I can see that it is a well-shaped mouth, and, I dare say, considered quite Cupid's-bow-ish among the Farrells.'

'I wonder you should look at him so much. I have always thought him a most rotten creature.'

'So he is. Of course he is. I am only trying to account for Mrs. Tom, and Poll. Poll evidently does not altogether go in with us.'

Her sister nodded. 'I know. She never will allow that he is bald and pink. I thought *you* were going to dispute it, too, just now.'

'I? I only want to be reasonable. Poll was pleased with

him because he was civil to her; and now she looks on him as *her* friend, and does not like our running down *her* friend. So much for Pollkins; she is pretty guileless; and it is not fair of you, Georgie, to suspect she would lead on any man——'

'Not a man; but a Billy she might.'

'No, no; and we must give her a hint to be careful. And see here; take care what you are about to-day.' It was the morning of the luncheon party. 'Mind what I say. Take care.'

'Right you are. I'll take care.'

'Those Farrells have eyes in their backs. And if they catch you making game of Billy——'

'They sha'n't catch me. I'll not be caught'—*emphatically*; 'this child wasn't born to be caught.'

'You have not been out among them as I have. It's awful—the strain. You get to imagine at last that the very stones along the road are Farrells. And they talk and talk. They tell each other everything, going round from house to house. And they are all *in* it, and we are *out* of it. And they are perfection, and we just the other thing——'

'We are certainly not perfection, Bet.'

'I am always hoping that Lionel will not discover what the Farrells think of us. They look down upon us——'

'Oh, not now.'

'I don't know; this may be a passing vagary. But whatever can have put it into Mrs. Tom's head? She must know us. She can't like us——'

'Any one of us would lead Billy a devil of a life.'

'We are not prettier than other girls; we are not rich; we are not one bit religious——'

'Billy's remaining hairs would stand on end at us.'

'And supposing we are clever, what is the good of cleverness with the Farrells? They think they are *all* clever; just as they are all beautiful, and all everything else. As a fact, not one of them, except the little governess—she is clever enough—has the wits of a——'

'Of a Billy-goat,' said Georgie, supplying a simile. 'Perhaps that is why we are wanted; to supply the Billy-goat with brains. Mrs. Tom may have found out that there is a trifling deficiency beneath the little bald patch, and she may abhor the vacuum, as Nature does. Now, you and I, Bet—false modesty, avaunt!—may be wild and wicked and ignorant, even as a cruel brother points

out ; but we *are* clever ; no one can say we are not clever. Aren't we clever, Bet, my Bet ?—in a droll, pleading note.

'So you think we are to transmit our brains to Billy ?'

'Billy is to marry one, and absorb the cleverness of all three. I warrant it would make him fizz. Mrs. Tom little knows what she might be letting her poor Billchen in for. We'd put him in our middle, and charge the whole battery. Bang ! Billy would inflate like a Dunlop tyre, and mount up like a balloon. Mrs. Tom would never be able to lay hands upon her goatikin again. It would be his emancipation. Up—up—up he would go, like the old drunk monk in the picture.'

'Drunk monk !' frowned Bet.

'In dulce Jubilo,
Up—up—up we go !'

sang her sister, saucily. 'Don't you remember the picture of the old drunk monk in his wine-cellar ?'

'There you are, at it again ! I told you not to talk about those sort of people ; or, if you must, stick to the respectable ones. Lionel says——'

'He is always saying stupid things.'

'He is not. And he is quite right. Just you let saints and monks alone, and don't be profane. I am going to look after you in future. I promised Lionel I would.'

Georgie made a face.

'And when you are at Beech Hall to-day,' proceeded her sister, striking while the iron was hot, 'do be careful what you say and how you behave. Don't throw away this opportunity. It is the first we have ever had ; for they have, every one of them, kept us at arm's-length hitherto, and I daresay it will depend very much on the impression we make to-day—'

'But how do you know anyone will be there ?'

'I have thought it out, and feel sure there will. There is something in the air—a new feel—a genial warmth that betokens a change in the hitherto frigid Farrell atmosphere. Honestly, I am glad of it.' (It might have been the quiet, serious, little colonel speaking.) 'I am glad of it,' continued Bet. 'It might do something for us. We laugh at the Farrells ; but, after all, one can laugh at anybody and everybody if one sets about to do it. I should not mind being on more friendly terms with some of them, at any rate. The Stephen Farrells, for instance. If those girls would condescend to be intimate with us, it might

be very useful. And though I have no ambition to enter the family——'

'Wouldn't touch it with a barge-pole.'

'—— we ought to force them to respect us!' cried Bet, with sudden spirit. 'What do they mean by looking down upon us? Lionel would say it is our fault, but I don't know that it is. Certainly, whatever we are, and whoever we are, they would still think we are not *Farrells*. . . . And suppose we are not, pray? Suppose we think that we don't wish to be, pray? We have blue blood in our veins, which is more than any single Farrell has. We are above them—not below them;' her eyes flashing as she spoke.

Georgie, never quite easy with her sister in this mood, made haste to turn it. Blue blood was nothing to her; the topic of the moment was of much greater interest.

'And you think Mrs. Tom—you think it is this that Mrs. Tom is thinking of?'

'No, I don't,' said Bet, bluntly. 'I doubt if she even knows. How should she, or any of them, know? We came here with no introductions; and they only called because it happened that Lionel knew the Stephen Farrell boy at Harrow. They were not obliged to call. It is not as if this were a country neighbourhood. On the whole, it is rather wonderful that they did discriminate between us and the hosts of small semi-detached-villa people about. All the same, we are not going to marry Billy Farrell, thank you'—rising and curtsying to an imaginary personage. 'We think we can go one better than that. Billy,' with a feint of addressing him next, 'I daresay most people would say you were a very good match for poor girls like us, with nothing but a rag of birth wherewith to clothe the nakedness of the land—and that not even on our father's side—but *we* don't see it, Billy. Understand that, Billy. We'll play the game; be very nice to you, and you may be very nice to us; but——'

'Thy little Billies cannot be our Billies,' assented Georgie. 'Wherefore curb thy tongue and calm thy spirit, my Billy-boy. Billchen Mavourneen, the grey dawn is breaking—that is to say, the hall clock is striking, and I must fly to get ready;' and so saying the younger sister bounded lightly away, while the elder more soberly followed.

'I hope we shall get through with this all right,' muttered she, uneasily; as she paused for a moment at the staircase window—she seldom passed that way without pausing to glance without. 'I do hope we shall. But somehow I feel as if this

Billy business had grown to be rather a large order. Georgie has no sense. I wish I had not encouraged quite so much of it; because, though *I* know where to stop, she may not; and in Mrs. Tom's drawing-room I can't get at her to quench her, as I can at home. Too late now, however;' slowly moving on. 'We must trust to luck. After all, it *is* rather cheek of Mrs. Tom to show her hand so openly. I must say I should like, should rather like to let her see for once that Lord Umfreville's granddaughters—but, oh dear me! I don't think very much of Lord Umfreville's granddaughters myself,' concluded poor Bet, with a bitter little laugh.

(To be continued.)

*The Evolution of a Reputation.*¹

THE history of an opinion is often more curious, as well as more interesting, than the history of a man—its biography a more complex and intricate matter. And the history of a reputation, being not only the history of an opinion, but of one having for its centre a personal object, is apt to pass through stages of special acuteness; so that it is no uncommon thing to find generation after generation doing battle on its behalf with the passion of a discipleship or the animosity of a private hatred, and each in its turn pronouncing sentence with that strange and arrogant finality which, reversing it may be the verdict of a former court, refuses to take into account the possibility of a future reconsideration of its own.

But though such controversies may be common enough, there are few figures round whom they have raged with so much fierceness as round those of the principal actors in the French Revolution. 'Agités dans leur mémoire comme dans leur vie, ils n'ont pu se détacher de la tourmente qui, après les avoir étouffés, emporte et insulte depuis un demi-siècle leurs ombres maudites.' Thus wrote, more than fifty years ago, Esquiros, the historian of the Mountain. Public opinion has undergone many changes since his day, and it is interesting to note after what fashion those changes have affected the reputation of the men of whom it was question; and to trace in particular the manner in which the rehabilitation of Danton—the most notable of them all—has pursued its course.

The causes of the singular divergence of opinion with regard to him are not far to seek. There are two methods, broadly speaking, of writing biography—the one from outside, the other from within. The first deduces character from action; the second reads actions by character; and while each method possesses merits of its own, neither, taken by itself, is wholly

¹ *Life of Danton*, by A. H. Beesly (Longmans, 1899). *Danton: a Study*, by H. Belloc (Nisbet, 1899).

satisfactory. To judge a man by his actions alone is a crude and rudimentary system of valuation; and the dictum 'Caesar's history will paint out Caesar'—put by Emerson into somebody else's mouth—is one which, taken without reservation, will scarcely find many to endorse it. While, on the other hand, to follow too boldly the plan of interpreting action by character is apt to lead a historian into devious paths and not a few rash conclusions. 'If . . . we make men behave in a way which contradicts all their lives,' says one of Danton's latest apologists, 'we must (it seems to me) be in error.' But it was Moses, the meekest of men, who smote the rock. And to quote Mr. Belloc once more, 'till we can say "this man *could not* have acted in such and such a manner as report would have us believe" . . . we do not understand a personality.' But is any variation from a general course of conduct intrinsically out of the question—any sin too black to be committed by a saint—any flash of heroism impossible to the sinner? While in the explanation given by another biographer of Danton's address to the September murderers we trace the application of a like principle to a concrete fact. 'He who thanks you'—such is the commonly received version of the speech—'does so, not as Minister of Justice, but as Minister of the Revolution.' 'What Danton said, if he said anything,' is Mr. Beesly's comment, 'amounted, no doubt, to this: "As Minister of Justice I cannot thank you for yesterday's work. As Minister of the Revolution I do thank you for volunteering."' Which one cannot but consider a somewhat loose paraphrase of the original, adopted upon the principle of probability.

It is in a skilful combination of the two modes of working that a biographer's best chance of success should lie—in ascertaining, that is, what actions of a man's life may be accepted as beyond doubt; and having arrived by means of them at a certain estimate of his character, to allow that estimate its due weight as a factor, but not the only factor, in deciding upon the credibility of the rest.

If, however, this rule is accepted as offering the fairest chance of a veracious picture, it is clear that special difficulties must have beset those historians who have attempted to produce such a portrait of Danton. It is, of course, a truism to say that, except in cases where a man leaves written evidence behind him, the data upon which he must ultimately be judged is reduced to contemporary evidence; and that it is upon the sufficiency of such

evidence that the truth and completeness of a portrait will depend. But even where such evidence is abundant, the difficulties of the biographer may be little diminished. For the witness of contemporaries is at all times apt to be coloured by prejudice or partiality; and, more especially at such a period as that of the Revolution, when passion and party spirit were stimulated almost to the point of frenzy, posterity searches in vain among the multitudinous records of the time for those cool and deliberate accounts of men and events, unbiassed by personal sentiment, upon which conclusions might safely be based.

In the case, too, of Danton—Carlyle's *Enfant Perdu* of the Revolution—the judgment of contemporaries was peculiarly liable to be at fault. To the sworn enemies of the great convulsion of which he was one of the dominating spirits, he was necessarily representative of all those evil and destructive forces which were in their opinion threatening society; whilst the animosities, personal and public, which divided men ranged nominally under the same standard, were not less envenomed than the hostility of more open opponents. It is also asserted that Danton himself did not a little to add to the confusion by the use of language intended rather as a blind than as a true expression of his sentiments. 'The severity of the last sentence meant nothing,' says Mr. Beesly, after quoting a speech in which the moderation he ascribes to his hero is somewhat conspicuously absent; 'it was merely a rhetorical artifice so constantly resorted to by Danton for silver-coating the main thesis which many of his audience would find so unpalatable.' Garat, too, among contemporaries, states that Danton was accustomed to disguise his pity under 'des rugissements'; and a man who resorts to such methods must expect to be misjudged.

In the face of these difficulties it is not to be wondered at that opinions concerning him should have been many and various; and before proceeding to examine the curious phases through which his reputation has passed, it may be well to offer some samples of the mass of contemporary evidence upon which judgments so diverse have been based. In comparing them, however, it should be borne in mind that whilst the Gironde, with which Danton was in constant collision, was, as Carlyle has pointed out, a party of memoir-writers, there was a marked absence of such activity amongst his own partisans, and that impartiality is not a quality inseparable from literary merit. 'J'ai parfois admiré,' says Michelet, 'la férocité des lettrés.

Ils arrivent à des excès de nerveuse fureur que les hommes moins cultivés n'atteignent pas.'

There was one point, at least, concerning Danton upon which enemies and friends were from the first agreed. Few attempts were made to minimise his importance, or to deny the greatness, if not the supremacy, of his power. Thus Barère, the time-server *par excellence* of the period, while charging the dead Tribune with many sins, bears witness to his pre-eminence. 'One must resign oneself to pronounce their execrable names'—Danton's and Robespierre's—says the ex-member of the Committee of Public Safety, 'when one desires to paint the genius of crime.' And again he dwells on the 'affreuse énergie,' the terrible talent 'd'imbrogléo révolutionnaire,' possessed by the general of the sans-culottes.

Lafayette's witness is, of course, that of a frank enemy. 'Quant à Danton,' he says, 'il eut bien plus la confiance du parti que Robespierre, et il la méritait par des talents distingués comme par sa monstrueuse immoralité.' While in the opinion of Peltier, another royalist, compared to Danton not only Robespierre, but Marat, were stars of inferior magnitude.

Madame Roland, no doubt, by her detestation of the only man who might have saved her own comrades, did much to assure to the latter their ruin; and a dialogue between her and Brissot defines well enough the position ascribed to him by his foes within the revolutionary party.

'Quelle honte,' she is reported as saying, 'que le conseil soit souillé par ce Danton, dont la renommée est si mauvaise.'

'Que voulez-vous, Madame?' returned Brissot. 'Il faut prendre la force où elle est.'

It was not from the Girondists that Danton could look for justice. Yet even among their ranks conflicting voices are heard; and Condorcet, in especial, pays a high tribute to the eloquence, intelligence, and character of the man to whom he was so often opposed; adding that he possessed the precious quality never found in ordinary men, in that he neither hated nor feared enlightenment, talent, or virtue.

Another witness, already quoted, carries with him the weight of one who was neither friend nor foe. Described by Danton himself as amiable and impartial, Garat has left upon record his opinion of the man whom he succeeded as Minister of Justice. Led, as he believed, by ambition to the conception of a Republic in which he himself would play a leading part, Danton was at once bold and lazy—'né paresseux,' says Vilate also—ardent and indolent, 'un

grand seigneur de la sans-culotterie.' Whatever might be the charges of venality made against him, it was certain, according to Garat, that in no such bargain had he ever betrayed his party. As to September, the verdict of the ex-Minister of Justice is given with singular caution. 'J'ignore,' he says, 's'il a fermé ses yeux et ceux de la justice quand on égorgeait : on m'a assuré qu'il avait approuvé comme ministre ce qu'il détestait sûrement comme homme.' While at a later date he credits him with an attempt to lay the tempest largely due to himself, and to restore the reign of law and order, his sole personal ambition at that time being to repair the ills he had wrought to France, and, having done so, to give himself up to a peaceful and domestic life. Such is the witness of Garat, who has left upon record, 'Je n'étais pas son ami,' and who is described by Mr. Beesly as honourable, if weak.

On another characteristic, besides strength, most men are also agreed. In spite of the brutality and the indifference to bloodshed, if not the love of it, with which he has been till lately charged, he has rarely been accused of personal rancour, or of having used his power for the ends of private vengeance. His nature, admits a bitter opponent, 'se refusait à toute personnalité.' 'Call it magnanimous,' was the laconic rejoinder of Royer Collard, who had known and acted in opposition to him, when in later days someone allowed that Danton had, after all, had a fine character. In the massacres, no single personal enemy of his is said to have perished, nor is it recorded that he ever betrayed a friend.

Such was the man, in the eyes of some of his contemporaries, of whom, after more than half a century of general obloquy, it was declared by M. Aulard, summing up fifteen years ago the conclusions of a new school, that of the revolutionary heroes none was more moral, more well-informed, more humane, 'plus pur d'argent, plus pur de haine,' and who has more lately still found in England not less ardent eulogists. In tracing the vicissitudes through which his reputation has passed, it will suffice to glance at the estimates formed by fairly representative men : in the first place of his character as a whole, and in particular of the part played by him in what all must admit to have been the most doubtful episode of his public life—the September massacres. The verdict passed upon his conduct at that juncture may fairly be regarded as a test of the tide-mark of public opinion.

It is in such histories as those of Mignet and Montgaillard, and in Mortimer Ternaux's *History of the Terror*, that is to be

found the version of Danton's career generally credited in the early part of the century. For fifty years after his death there seems indeed to have existed a rare consonance of opinion as to its general features. 'The account given of Danton,' says Mr. William Smythe, Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, writing in the year 1840, 'is everywhere the same;' and the nature of this alleged consensus of opinion is indicated by a paragraph of his own: 'I speak not of Danton or others,' he observes; 'they are fiends in human shape, and we need say no more of them;' while he further asserts that all historians are agreed that it was Danton and his associates by whom the September murders were planned and executed.

Though the statements were inaccurate there was doubtless much to justify them. According to the popular theory of the day Danton was brutal, bloodthirsty, venal, coarse, and profligate; though to these and other attributes of the same order was added a strength which only rendered them the more formidable. There was something colossal in his wickedness—*le vice énorme*, as Esquiroz termed it. In Mignet's eyes—and he is cited by Dr. Robinet, one of Danton's most enthusiastic admirers, as taking a more tolerant view than others—he was a revolutionary of gigantic proportions; ardent, of lax morals, and surrendering himself by turns to his passions and his party; and if not altogether vile it was because he belonged to those men in whom baseness itself is exalted.

Montgaillard, writing in 1827, is more wholly uncompromising in his severity. Even Danton's eloquence is simply in his opinion that of the 'charlatan des rues;' his logic, the highwayman's; his soul the 'foyer' of an infinitude of vices; whilst his share in the massacres is, by both writers alike, taken for granted.

Mortimer Ternaux is equally explicit in his charges. Marat conceived the murderous plot: 'Danton, lui aussi, regarda son crime en face et n'hésita pas;' while he quotes Louis Blanc's verdict upon the parts respectively played in the September tragedy by Robespierre and Danton: 'Entre Danton, concourant aux massacres parce qu'il les approuva, et Robespierre ne les empêchant pas, quoiqu'il les déplore, je n'hésite pas à déclarer que le plus coupable c'est Robespierre.'

It was no doubt upon such writers as these that the English historians of the earlier part of the century formed their opinions. In the standard work of the period, *Russell's Modern Europe* (completed by William Jones in 1828), the summary of Danton's character is, much of it, taken straight from Mignet, while it is

further stated that 'early habits of profligate indulgence . . . and his implication with the Orleans faction, made him, if not a worse, certainly a meaner, villain than nature had designed him.' He is, however, allowed to be, compared to Robespierre, not indeed an eagle but a high soaring vulture.

Carlyle's was almost the first voice of any note—in England, at least—to be raised in his defence, and it was some time before it found an echo.

To him the force of the man, physical and mental—the size, so to speak, of the personality—could not fail to appeal; and he discerned in him, besides, a profound reality, a genuineness and absence of pretence which outweighed in his eyes many sins: 'a gigantic mass of valour, ostentation, fury, affection, and wild revolutionary manhood,' pure from the one unforgivable sin of cant; 'a very man . . . fiery-real, from the great fire bosom of nature herself.' Yet, differing therein from later apologists, he made no attempt to exonerate him from responsibility with regard to the September massacres. On the question of active participation in the counsels which led to them he is, indeed, silent, but the responsibility involved in a policy of non-interference he takes for granted. 'Minister of Justice is his name, but Titan of the Forlorn Hope and *Enfant Perdu* of the Revolution is his quality, and the man acts according to that. "We must put our enemies in fear!" Deep fear, is it not, as of its own accord, falling on our enemies? The Titan of the Forlorn Hope, he is not the man that would swiftest of all prevent its so falling.'

Carlyle was before his time, and years were to pass before the rehabilitation begun by him was to be carried forward. In 1840, three years after his partial vindication, appeared the book on the French Revolution already quoted, by Professor Smythe, who, ignoring the great historian who had preceded him, triumphantly cited the unanimity prevailing with regard to Danton and his career; and about the same time M. Thiers's history was published, scarcely less damning in most respects to his character. He possessed, in the opinion of the statesman, a superior understanding and a vast imagination—in crediting him with this last gift M. Thiers stands almost alone—but, violent and fickle, cruel and generous, was the slave of his passions. To Marat's atrocious dreams he lent his daring, and the two together hatched the September plot.

It is unnecessary to multiply examples from among the writers who followed faithfully in the beaten track. But a greater

man was to add his portrait to the rest, and Lamartine's handiwork must have had no little effect upon the public of his day. Bitter and envenomed as it is, his picture is drawn by an artist. Danton, as Lamartine conceives him, was the expression of the spirit of the mob, his power over it springing from that resemblance. Devoid of honour, principle, and morality, his dominating passion was love of excitement. 'He was intoxicated with the revolutionary vertigo as a man becomes drunk with wine,' and worshipping force alone, his genius consisted in contempt for honesty. Revolution was for him a game, the stake his life; his most revolutionary movements the marked prices at which he was purchaseable. Bought daily, he was next morning once more for sale. Nature, genius, cause, destiny, death, all indeed were great, but conscience was lacking. The sentiment—frequently the passion—of liberty were his, but not the faith. It was with him an instinct, not a religion.

In Lamartine the tide of hostile criticism may be said to have reached its height. If others said as much, no one said it so well; and even in the history of Esquiros signs of the re-action which was to come are discernible. While Danton still stands charged with a principal part in the massacres, he is stated to have accepted that responsibility as a terrible duty; and, moreover, to have interposed on behalf of 'toutes les victimes intéressantes;' while at his death and that of his friends the Revolution, we are told, wept like Rachel and refused to be comforted, because her children were not. 'If they committed faults, those faults will be forgiven them by history, for they loved France and liberty well.'

In Michelet's history, too, Danton's figure, if as colossal and not less terrible than before, is differently handled. 'The tragical name of Danton,' he says, 'however soiled and disfigured by himself or by party feeling, will remain one of the dearest memories and regrets of France. . . . His crimes are uncertain, improbable. He initiated several of the wisest and greatest of the measures which saved France.' And yet, describing a portrait, he reads into it what is manifestly his own estimate of the man: 'Obscurité, vertige, fatalité, ignorance absolu de l'avenir—voilà ce qu'on lit ici. Et pourtant ce monstre est sublime.' A characterisation more at issue with the modern view can scarcely be imagined.

Before crossing the gulf separating from the school inaugurated by M. Bougeart in 1861, not only those amongst earlier historians incapable of perceiving any redeeming qualities in Danton, but likewise those who recognised his claim to a partial vindica-

tion, it may be well to refer briefly to the charge of venality so freely preferred against him by contemporaries and historians alike. The accusation is repeated again and again, in detail and specifically. Among the Royalists Bertrand Molleville and Lafayette were particularly clear and damning in their charges. By the Girondist Brissot, Danton is distinctly named among the stipendiaries of the Orleanist faction; Madame Roland records her belief in the venality of the man she hated, and Robespierre's accusations are too well known to need quotation.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that on the authority of such witnesses, drawn from almost every party, the calumny, if calumny it were, should have been repeated by historians. What it is important to note with regard to that evolution of his reputation with which this paper is concerned, is that no accusation has been, in the opinion of his late apologists, more completely and successfully refuted than this, and that to summarize the matter in the words of M. Aulard, quoted above, no man stands at the bar of posterity 'plus pur d'argent' than Danton.

It is from the publication by Dr. Bougeart of his *Documents authentiques pour servir à l'histoire de la Révolution française*, that the commencement of this new school must be dated—a school which numbers amongst its principal representatives Dr. Robinet and M. Aulard in France, and Messrs. Morse Stephens, Belloc, and Beesly in England. To read the general estimate formed by these writers of Danton's life and character, is like a return to the commonplace light of day after the limelight effects of a melodrama. The scene has changed into a world of prose, from which angels and demons alike, the monsters and the ogres of the fairy tale and of the revolutionary legend, are banished. In the Danton they depict the human element has superseded the monstrous; the colossal proportions shrink; the 'vast imagination' with which he was credited by M. Thiers disappears; he becomes a practical reformer of creative genius, restricting his aims to what was possible; the statesman, if not the opportunist, of the Revolution; large-hearted and sincere, with the *culte* of friendship and the gift of cordiality; alike in public and private life 'un homme de bien.' 'Free from idle dreams,' says Mr. Morse Stephens, 'as well as from thirst for vengeance, if France were but happy and at peace Danton was content, knowing that Utopias could not be realised, and that attempts to create them did not justify bloodshed.' And yet this writer adds, somewhat inconsistently, that 'the greatest blot of his administration

was his indifference to the massacres at the prisons, for his power could have stopped them at once. But he regarded these massacres as an advantage to France, and believed that they cleared the way for a new and more energetic government.'

On this last point Mr. M^r Stephens is in marked disagreement with the rest of his school. It is Bougeart who struck the key note with which most of the modern variations upon this theme are in harmony. His apology is a curious piece of special pleading, which it is worth while for this reason to examine at some length. Danton, according to his account of the matter, it was true, did nothing to prevent the massacres, but not because he was indifferent to them; still less because he approved them, but simply because he was powerless to restrain the mob; he remained at his post (of Minister of Justice), because to resign would have been to destroy the balance between the Assembly and the Commune, and with it the chances of restoring the reign of law and order. The machine had been thrown with too much force for one man's strength to avail to arrest it—'*Danton la laissa passer.*' Again, '*Danton restant impassible, l'œil fixé sur le champ de carnage, les égorgés durent enfin s'arrêter, car la justice était là, toujours veillant, toujours armée, et demain . . . la loi reprendra ses droits.*' Inspired by his genius with the idea of keeping his place on the heights of power, so as to be visible from all points and to guide as far as possible that force which he was unable to restrain, he remained at his post, and, repressing his repugnance, was enabled, by a last and sublime effort, to hold out a firm hand to the '*Septembriseurs*,' and to tell them, '*it is not the Minister of Justice, it is the Minister of the Revolution who thanks you.*' Must not these incriminating words have made the murderers feel that their task was accomplished, that they were to retire, to lay down the knife in order to take up the gun?

Such, summarised, is M. Bougeart's argument. It may be that some minds may not find it convincing; but it is on the line there laid down that Danton's later apologists have on the whole proceeded; and this is particularly the case with Mr. Belloc and Mr. Beesly, the latest contributors to Dantonian literature.

Mr. Belloc's biography, as he states in his preface, is founded upon the materials collected by Dr. Bougeart, M. Aulard, and Dr. Robinet, of whose views he is therefore the avowed exponent. But there is, in addition, a touch of something akin to romance in his book, due less to his subject than to a certain quality pervading and colouring his work, and this in spite of the fact that to the

writer, no less than to the rest of his school, his hero is representative pre-eminently of the sterling common-sense of the Revolution. Sane, practical, and just, violent indeed, but for the most part master of his own violence, he is, in Mr. Belloc's eyes, the incarnation of the French peasant—as much a product of the soil of France as its wine—‘when we study him . . . we feel France.’ With nothing in common with the dreamers of the age, with Robespierre, the theorist, or St. Just, the visionary, what he desired was practical reform, the tangible and material good of the nation. Falling back upon insurrection when forced to it by the treason of the Court, he destroyed the monarchy, delivered the nation, accepted the responsibility, and sacrificed his reputation. ‘He saved France, but at this expense, that he went out of the world with a reputation that he knew to be false, that he saw his great powers vulgarised, and that he could never possess, either in his own mind or before the world, not even in France, his true name . . . If you sum it up, it comes to this paraphrase of a great sentence: *Son nom était flétri mais la France était libre.*’

Such is the tragedy unfolded by Mr. Belloc, a tragedy which, as he reads it, reached its height in September, when, with the foreign armies threatening the very existence of France, the people went mad, and Danton had to look on, powerless to restrain them. ‘He and his silence were most like this: a man in a mutiny on shipboard, in a storm at night, keeping the helm, saving what could be saved, and careless whether the morning should make him seem a traitor on the one hand, or a mutineer upon the other. For the tragedy of those five days—the days of Sedan—always seems to be passing in a thick night . . . we cannot believe the sun shone.’

One remembers M. Aulard's words: ‘*Il contient sa douleur.*’ Surely it would have been better, for himself and for France, had he given it vent!

Whether or not the picture carries conviction, there is something almost touching, almost pathetic, in the intense and passionate humanity of the Danton of Mr. Belloc. In his account of the closing scene of the drama he makes use of a suggestive phrase, which gives the key to much of the power possessed by Danton in that age of dreams and of hysteria—the power of tangible flesh and blood. ‘Their souls,’ he says, speaking of poor raving Camille Desmoulins and of the feeble d'Eglantine, the poet—‘their souls leant upon his body.’

In Mr. Beesly's biography, written from much the same point of view, the difference of atmosphere which is perceptible only makes the agreement of the two writers on the main points of Danton's life and character the more striking. While both are confessedly partisans, the element of romance characterising Mr. Belloc's defence is absent from that of Mr. Beesly. But the account given by each of Danton himself is so essentially in accord that each lends to the other corroborative force, and the two together may fairly be accepted as representative of the deliberate opinion of those who at the present day have made his career their study. In Mr. Beesly's book the strong affections, the rugged tenderness, upon which Mr. Belloc dwells are perhaps less apparent. His hero is depicted as bold, resolute, and strong, with the daring of a man whose primary object was, not the gratification of selfish ambition, but the welfare of the people at large. A true statesman, and possessed of robust common-sense, he was ready to compromise when compromise was all that was possible, and was so far from sharing the lust for blood common at that day, and which has been so persistently connected with his memory, that while he lived the work of the guillotine was kept in check. For the rest, a sociable, pleasant, and kindly companion, and in private life, once more to use M. Aulard's expression, an '*homme de bien*,' such is the latest estimate of the man who for long, both in history and fiction, played the part of the bloodthirsty demon of the Revolution. It is in regard to September that Mr. Beesly's defence, like that of Danton's other apologists, is at its weakest. In his opinion, as in Mr. Belloc's, his inaction was justified by the hopelessness of any attempt to arrest the bloodshed—'he would, on behalf of his bitter enemies, have lost a popularity essential to the main work he had in hand, and, without saving anyone else's life, might have lost his own.' But, whatever else Danton was, he was no coward, and the line of justification here pursued fails to carry conviction. Again, contends Mr. Beesly, if there was a culprit in the matter, it was not Danton, but Roland, whose duty it was, as Minister of the Interior, to preserve order. But Danton's responsibility, in the then condition of Paris, could be measured and limited, not by the office he nominally held, but by his influence and power alone; and few people would deny that his power was at that moment supreme.

One characteristic remains to be noted. It belongs to a side of his nature which, being negative rather than positive, has attracted little attention either from friend or foe. Yet without a

reference to his attitude towards religion the picture would be incomplete.

With the extravagance of atheism and the blasphemous parade of it current at the time, he had no sympathy, any more than with the visionaries who would have erected a fantastic creation of their own upon the ruins of the faith they had thrown down. It is probable that he regarded each alike with contempt. It is said that in his marriage with his second wife, a pious Catholic, he was obeying the wishes of his first; who, dying, had desired to secure a religious education for her children. It seems certain that he received her at the hands of a non-juring priest; even, it is said, making his confession on the occasion with that perfunctory compliance with custom which marks the frank indifferentist. But a speech in defence of the constitutional priesthood strikes another note. It was treason against the people, he declared, to take away its dreams. To the priest the poor owed their little moments of happiness. Let their illusions be left them, and let them not fear that the one thing which, in the absence of wealth, bound them to earth, was to be taken from them.

It is the pleading of a sceptic, but of a scepticism which has no desire to make proselytes, and which would leave to earth's disinherited at the least their hopes.

And so Georges Jacques Danton, after a hundred years, stands before the world, still awaiting its final verdict; somewhat shrunken in his colossal proportions since the days when he came near to representing in the eyes of his enemies the incarnate principle of evil, or since Carlyle first set his hand to the rehabilitation of the 'cloudy Atlas' of his time; become common flesh and blood, very human, and not otherwise than credible.

With that final verdict this paper has not concerned itself, nor with the question whether, even yet, the last portrait has been painted or others are yet to come, to hang side by side, discordant and contradictory, in that great gallery where picture replaces picture as the great upholsterer Time clears each away in turn. These are among the things it is impossible to predict. '*L'histoire*,' says Lamartine, '*est la conscience du genre humain*;' and he adds that '*le cri de cette conscience sera la condamnation de Danton*.' It may be so; but history is long in making up her mind, and not a little prone to a reversal of her sentences.

I. A. TAYLOR.

Jane Anne—Lump.¹

'STOP you here, come the fair,' said the mistress persuasively, pausing for a moment in her work.

'I won't,' said Jane Anne sturdily, and her answer was accompanied by the harsh clatter of a milk-pan upon stones. The mistress sat feathering in the doorway of the house-place, and the white down from the half-plucked goose which lay across her knee blew about in the light breeze and settled in her grey hair.

'Be you going to be married, Jane Anne?'

'Yiss, Johnnie George an' me did think to, if so be as he can hier hisself to a place what has a cottage.'

'Well, well,' said the mistress wearily, 'I do wonder at you, I do, an' him so flighty.'

'Ain't more flighty than most men be,' said she, rubbing a milk-pail briskly with coarse red sand; 'an' any ways I will learn him to be steady ownet we be married.'

The mistress sighed; she knew it was futile to argue with Jane Anne once she had made up her mind. Jane Anne, she also knew, was a treasure as farm servants go, and was not likely to be replaced in a hurry.

A day or so after Jane Anne left the little mountain farm early in the morning while the mists yet hung white on the hill-sides. She had a long way to walk to the country town where the hiring and pleasure fairs are held twice a year. She tucked up her skirts, for the deep lanes, where the branches of tangled hazel and black-thorn met over her head, were damp and muddy with decaying leaves, and Jane Anne had on her best dress. She was a comely lass with her rosy cheeks and bright eyes. The way was lonely, but as she descended to more populous regions she overtook another servant girl, also bound for the fair. 'Morning, Pol,' said Jane Anne pleasantly. 'I thought your missus wass not let you go to the fair?'

¹ Colloquial term for farm servant in S. Wales.

'Yiss, so she did say, but I runned away,' said the other, half awed at her own boldness. She had a timid deprecating air; she looked as though she had been driven whither she would not all her life.

'I 'ouldn't go back neither, if I was you,' said Jane Anne; 'you ain't got no spirit to let folks drive you like they does. I be going to be married,' she added with a blush.

'Lor!' said Pol, 'there's lucky you be! an' so many gals have 'onted to have Johnnie George. He be so good-looking an' so smart; there wass wan gal he wass keep company with 'fore he comed to Jenkinse, she did break her heart for him.' Pol's voice was lowered and impressive, and Jane Anne listened with a dawning wonder.

'Yis, sure,' continued Pol, pleased by her companion's attention. 'There's times she did go 'most crazy, an' fro'ed herself in the watter, yis indeed!'

'Be she dead?' asked Jane Anne gravely, and her bright face was clouded.

'Noa, I don't b'lieve what she be, but I heard say as she be bound for the churchyard, for he have broke her heart.'

'I don't believe in broken hearts myself,' said Jane Anne, trying to shake off the unpleasant impression the other's words had left.

'Hearts doant break none so easy; may be they do crack some times like; but there, it be easy to talk—if Johnnie George hadn't took up with me he 'ould have had somebody else; he is always a chap to go along wi' a gal; he'd never have kep' to that gal, she livin' miles away an' him over to Jenkinse. There iss not wan chap but what I could have for the arsting,' with a proud toss of her head, 'but I liked Johnnie George best o' the lot, an' I had him, an' maybe if I don't marry him now I shan't never.'

At the town gates they met the fickle Johnnie George; he was radiant but bashful, and had rather a sheepish air. Jane Anne promptly took possession of his earnings, and after dealing him out some small change for pleasuring invested the rest in the savings bank.

'For if I doesn't,' she said, 'you'll spend it all or have it stole from yo' before night, an' then what'll us keep house with?'

He had no answer to this problem, though he would have preferred to keep his money. He was in some awe of Jane Anne, but he admired and was proud of her. This off her mind, Jane Anne settled steadily to enjoy herself. Booths, wild-beast shows,

shooting galleries and cheap-jack stalls filled the narrow cobble-paved streets of the usually quiet little town, while in a more open space near the church roundabouts and swing-boats were attracting large crowds of farm lads and lasses. Above the din of shouts and laughter came half-frightened shrill screams from the girls in the swinging-boats, and half-drowning it all the constant roar of the orchestrone playing popular airs with untiring vigour. Jane Anne entered with zest into all the pleasures of the fair. Johnnie George thought he had never seen her so gay. But still the thought of the girl she had heard of that morning haunted her. She wondered if by any chance she was at the fair. As if in answer to her thoughts, her eyes fell on a slight figure standing a little back from the crowd. She seemed to be alone, and she leant against the church wall in a weary and listless attitude, but she was watching some one in the swings with close attention.

Jane Anne followed the direction of her eyes, and saw they were fixed upon Johnnie George. She was about to cross over and speak to the girl when the crowd moved and she lost sight of her.

All day amidst the shifting, noisy crowd Jane Anne kept a sharp look out for her rival. It was getting dusk when she saw her again, and naphtha lights were beginning to flare on the cheap-jacks' stalls. The crowd was getting rougher, noisier, more hilarious; here and there a drunken man reeled across the street. The girl was standing near a fortune-teller's tent, and Jane Anne left Johnnie George and went up to her.

'Yo' be a friend o' Johnnie George's?' said Jane Anne, accosting her abruptly.

The girl shrank back before Jane Anne's rough greeting. She was smaller than Jane Anne, with large, soft, pathetic eyes, and very fair hair. She was pretty, but in a more fragile way than Jane Anne. She looked like a flower that had been beaten down by heavy rain.

'Tell yer fortune?' said the gipsy woman behind Jane Anne.

'Stop yo' here wan minute,' said Jane Anne peremptorily to the fair-haired girl.

'Yis,' she said, turning to the gipsy, 'look yo' sharp an' yo' shall say my fortune; here be sixpence, an' doant yo' say no stories, mind yo'.'

The gipsy, a gaily dressed dark woman with a villainous squint, took the sixpence and Jane's hand, and bending over it,

with a divided attention and a roving eye for fresh clients, muttered a certain formula she had repeated many times that day. Jane Anne listened with strained attention; to her this was a very serious undertaking. It was not easy to make out the gipsy's gabble in the noisy street, and Jane Anne was used to slow English-Welsh, and not this cockney-romany lingo, but she managed to make out that she was being promised a rich *dark* husband and many children, and that she 'would walk with many a lad before she found the right one.'

'Do you want to marry Johnnie George?' asked Jane Anne, when the fortune telling was concluded. The fair-haired girl blushed furiously and turned away; but Jane Anne was relentless, her feelings were not very fine, she spoke openly of things another girl would hardly have whispered. She repeated the question impatiently.

'No,' said the other, driven to bay and showing fight as even the gentlest creatures will. 'Yo' can have him an' welcome; yo' did draw him from me, an' yo' can keep him, but oh anwel, anwel, I did lov' him, an' I do now whateffer; an' look yo', Jane Anne Jones, 'twas me he did lov' the first.'

'Well, then,' said Jane Anne, who all this time had been maturing a plan in her mind, 'I ain't going to marry Johnnie George neither; I don't want other folkes' chaps, noa indeed, an' if yo' doesn't have him now somebody else will, maybe a gipsy 'ooman. An' he have got a 'stifacat, soa he could easy have the names changed, an' yo' two be married next week. Now us will find him an' tell him.'

Johnnie George's consent was a minor detail, which Jane Anne did not take into consideration. He was playing in a cocoanut shy while Jane Anne had been having her fortune told. Jane Anne brought him out, and he found himself face to face with his late sweetheart. It was an awkward moment. Jane Anne alone was collected and calm as usual; the orchestrone burst noisily into 'Sweethearts' Valse;' and Johnnie George giggled nervously to hide his embarrassment.

'Look yo' here, Johnnie George,' began his fiancée, 'I ben thinkin' o' things a bit, an' now I come to the point. I 'ont marry yo', but here's your ole sweetheart ready to have yo'—yo' be, bain't you?' she said, turning to the girl, who did not answer; she was crying quietly, and would have run away had not Jane Anne's hand lain heavy on her arm.

'Well, she be,' continued Jane Anne, who under other cir-

cumstances would have made a splendid champion for her sex. 'An', Johnnie George, yo've got that there 'stifacat, so yo' can jest get the name changed an' get married right off, an' I doant bear yo' no malice, Johnnie George. What I be doing iss for your good, an' yo' shall have that eight-day clock, with the likeness of the Prince o' Wales on the door, I wass buy. An' mind yo', she said to the fair-haired girl, 'yo' see he do bring home his wages an' take off his boots' fore he do sit down to the fire o' nights.' The two, who had listened to this exhortation in mute silence, continued staring at each other when Jane Anne had left them and disappeared in the crowd. The man was the first to find his tongue; his ideas worked slowly, but he had comprehended what Jane Anne wanted him to do. His old sweetheart was very comely; perhaps he had even thought regretfully of her when courting the more practical, stronger-minded Jane Anne. Certainly Jane Anne had been masterful; she had hardly let him have a drink the whole day. He did not think he would enjoy life much with her always at his elbow.

'Shall we do as she did say, me dear?' he asked the girl bashfully.

'I be willin' if yo' be,' said she, whose love partook of that divine quality which 'beareth all things, endureth all things.'

'Then us 'ull wed,' said he, with economical thoughts of the marriage certificate in his pocket.

It was beginning to rain when Jane Anne left the fair; brilliant lights flared on the shows, and as she left the town behind her the noise of the shouts and laughter and oaths died away, but she would still hear the ceaseless blatant music of the orchestrone as she made her way up the hill. There was moisture upon her face for which the rain was not accountable, but she brushed the tears roughly away.

'She'd a died if she wass not marry him,' she muttered to herself, 'a poor nesh body like her; an', 'deed to goodness, I do hope he'll behave proper, for he do want a 'ooman wi' sense after him.'

'I be main glad to have yo' back,' said the mistress, when wet and very weary she arrived at the farm. 'An' where be Johnnie George?'

'I have gived him the chuck, an' I don't want to hear no more o' him,' retorted Jane Anne impatiently; but she took the ailing baby gently from its tired mother and rocked it tenderly in her strong young arms. 'I wass have my fortune say,' she said after

awhile, 'an' the 'ooman did say I wass marrying a dark-man, an' Johnnie George be fair, so I did leave him.'

The mistress was not quite satisfied with this explanation, but she was a wise woman, and said no more to her handmaid. She remarked later to her husband, 'I dunnot understan' Jane Anre, but Johnnie George have lost more in her than he do know.'

MARY DOROTHEA EVANS.

From a Test Angler's Diary.

APRIL 1, 1899.—Fishing at C——, on the River Test, for the first time this year, with a high south-west wind blowing and the sun shining brightly during a great part of the day. A few good trout were 'tailing' in the shallows and on the bright green weeds, and neither they nor any others took the least notice of the few olive duns which hatched out a little after midday. Higher up stream, where the water is smaller and sharper, and the trout smaller and much more numerous, one might no doubt sometimes take fish under such conditions as these with a fly sunk and worked under water with a long line, but such a method much below—say, Whitchurch or Laverstoke on this river—would not be of the least use. As for the heavy water here at C——, you might as well fish with a dry salmon-fly as with a cast of wet trout-flies on a bright day, even at the very beginning of the season. This is not dry-fly purism, but simply common sense. The people who write of wet fly on the Test cannot know much of the habits of trout in chalk streams.

The season as yet scarcely invites one to dally by the river-side when the trout are not at the surface. Still there are a few signs of the young spring on C—— Common. Peewits fly ceaselessly overhead, as though they have eggs already, and the marsh marigold, the flower which 'shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray,' is appearing here and there. Cycling here from B—— this morning (with visions of grand two-pounders to be landed in the course of the day) I noticed the rooks on the nests in the Priory grounds, and I saw brimstone and small tortoiseshell butterflies about with one large white, whilst in a sheltered hedge a chaffinch was already building—an earnest this of the good time for the angler-naturalist coming. There has been much correspondence in the papers this year and last on the alleged scarcity of the kingfisher. I saw one to-day at C—— carrying a young

trout crosswise in its beak, and, indeed, I do not often go angling for two days or so without seeing one of these birds flashing by. Last year a pair had their nest in a chalk-pit at B—— at a little distance from the stream, and I am glad to say got off their young all right.

Several sharp frosts and a little snow of late have evidently discouraged the birds which nest early. Yesterday I was in the woods, and could find only a very few birds building, amongst them a pair of long-tailed titmice, which had completed about a third of the outside of their nest. There were no chiff-chaffs in the oaks, and the bird most in evidence was the great titmouse or ox-eye, which has a surprising variety of loud notes at this time of year. Blackbirds, thrushes, and skylarks were singing lustily up to about 7.30 P.M.

April 2, 1899.—Put on thick boots and went on to the marsh to look at the trout and hear the birds. What a weird, alluring place it is as the evening draws in! Snipes were bleating at dusk, though not many of them, and we repeatedly flushed others which flew off in a frantic way. Snipe when thus startled fly in a much more aimless, haphazard way than snipe bleating or humming overhead; and when thus roused they never bleat. There is no doubt whatever, by the way, that that strange sound is intentionally made by the bird. I was right in supposing the peewits had eggs already. Here on the marsh I soon found a couple of nests containing eggs, and others ready for them. Skylarks, titlarks in little parties of half a dozen or so, peewits, snipe, moorhens, and reed buntings—these are the birds of the marsh most in evidence just now. The colours of this beautiful spot are unnameable and indescribable. These dead grasses by the river brink, are they dun coloured, or light brown, or in some lights dark grey? It is hard to make up one's mind. The rich yellow of the kingcups is one of the few colours which are distinct and easy to be determined. In this district there is one delightful flower in full bloom now in cottage gardens—the mezereon (*Daphne mezereum*). It is said to grow wild in some of the woods still, and it has a sweet smell. The mezereon somewhat resembles the pink almond bloom, and the blossom comes before the leaf. I was touched to come upon a few sprigs of the flower, planted long ago, perhaps, on a dim, grass-grown grave in a little churchyard in north-west Hampshire. No better emblem surely than this flower, which will bloom while the snow is yet on the ground, of the Resurrection, without hope of which our even most

beautiful and secluded country churchyards would to many be dismal and shocking spots. And this reminds me that the palm is out here and there, and visited by many bees early abroad. In the hedge beautiful white violets abound for the gathering fingers of village lasses, who know where to find them April after April. The scented white violet is my favourite spring flower, and I never see any without thinking of a certain sunny bank by a hedge on a high chalk hill, when we used to look for them many years ago. Flowers are nothing without their associations.

April 4, 1899.—Fishing on C—— Common again. A terrible wind, with a good deal of north in it, blowing hard across the shallows, where a few fish moved at the duns, which began to come out a little after midday. I found one good trout rising eagerly at what duns came down his run, but it was some time before I could get my fly to him, as the wind blew furiously right into my face. At last I got the fly out over him by an underhand cast. It sat or 'cocked' up splendidly—the fly, I think, often does when one is fishing against a hard wind—and he had it in a moment. I netted him after a fierce, short struggle, and later on got another smaller fish of about a pound, the wind having somewhat abated. Then home in high spirits. What a difference it makes sometimes when we get a good trout or two, especially if we get them in the face of great difficulties! Fishermen are 'but children of a larger growth.'

April 5, 1899.—On B—— Common. A very few fish moving at a small number of olives about the middle of the day, but the rise was speedily over. I wandered about, scarcely expecting to get a sizable fish, after having wasted the hour or so during which the fish were at the surface over a trout in a corner almost impossible owing to the strong stream. However, in the course of the afternoon I did find one trout rising now and then in a little eddy right under my bank, and amongst some dangerous looking twigs and sticks—a good fish, I felt certain. It was impossible to cast the fly properly to this fish, though I had the wind with me. I let the wind therefore take out a short line and drop the fly over the very spot. Instantly it was taken, and in among the stakes and twigs dashed the trout right under my feet. At first I thought of giving him a loose line, but changed my mind, and kept, instead, a fair strain upon him. The water was here deep and rapid, and I could feel the fish changing his position, the line directly it was free of one twig getting caught in another. There seemed little chance of getting this trout, and yet in the end,

strange to relate, the line was free—a delightful sensation!—and in a few moments I was able to bring the fish down stream out of the heavy water to a shallow spot. He had not shown himself at all whilst in the deep, and by his play I took him to be a very good trout indeed—a three-pounder, perhaps. Yet the fish only weighed a little over $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. He was in fine condition, as many trout here, despite a belief to the contrary, often are as early even as the beginning of April, and 'cut' a beautiful pink. This was the only trout of the day. The rest of the afternoon I roamed about the common and searched for birds and bird-nests. Angling and field natural history combined make a fascinating pursuit.

May 23, 1899.—At the inn at B—. Never recognised till last night, or rather this morning, the wonderful power of song possessed by the little sedge-warbler. In a swampy bit of ground just outside the garden a pair have their nest, and at 3 A.M. I lay awake and listened for half an hour or so to the cock-bird singing long and loud. The song was continued without the least break for a space of time almost incredible. It was more sustained than the longest reeling of the grasshopper-warbler that I have heard, and of course far more so than the songs of any of the summer sylvan warblers or of the lark. Its strength, too, was quite marvellous, for so tiny a creature. I thought I distinguished imitations of the chiff-chaff's 'hoid, hoid!' the house-sparrow's chirruping, the chaffinch's sharp 'pink, pink!' At 10 P.M. last night the same bird was singing with the same spirit. Clearly the sedge-warbler is a real nocturnal singer, quite as much so as the nightingale itself. The only other bird, by the way, which I heard at about 3 A.M., was the cuckoo, and between his shout in the little croft beyond the garden and the 'first low matin chirp' of the waking birds of day there was a considerable interval.

The flowers of the marsh are beginning to show up. The shining cotton grass is to be seen in places about the middle of the common here, and the exquisite buck bean is in full bloom by the familiar white bridge. The common was known to botanists many years ago, and on its list of flowers, I believe, are the marsh orchis, the broad-leaved marsh orchis, the bog pimpernel, and the butterwort. There is an interesting flesh-coloured variety of the marsh orchis (*Orchis incarnata*), according to Mr. Townsend in his excellent 'Flora of Hampshire.' One learns from the same pleasant authority that the bee orchis was to be found at Hurstbourne Priors in this district, the marsh helleborine in Long

parish swamp, and the early spider orchis in plenty at Bulington; but plants, like butterflies, have a way of disappearing from a neighbourhood, and it may be that some of these have gone.

June 25, 1899.—Fishing at W——. For a second time this season my bag consisted of three brace to-day as against two and a half brace yesterday, but none of these trout scaled quite a pound. They were in fine condition. Several fish of 10 and 10½ inches, nominally takeable, which I put back, came several times out of the water and simply forced their way upstream once, even twice, before giving in. It is my fancy just now that I have never known such extraordinarily game trout as these W—— ones. One or two brace were rather dark, but the majority were light coloured. One trout which I landed and put back was of an exquisite golden hue; it simply glittered—an object of rare beauty. The trout have risen well these last two days, there being a nice hatch of duns in the morning and afternoon, but the fly has to be well presented for them to take it. It should float well, be 'cocked' as a rule, and the fatal 'drag' must be avoided. They are not exactly easy to take, but they are fair rising fish. It is very pretty sport, only the trout are small for the Test.

On a stretch of broad, almost still, water above the Mill there are some better fish in point of size, rising on and off the entire day, roaming up and down and *snapping* up the stray duns. These fish are never still—when on the feed—for more than a few seconds at a time, and consequently it would be hard to take them even if the extreme brightness and stillness of the water did not militate against one. As it is, they are about the most impossible rising fish to secure I have found anywhere. Their antipathy to the artificial fly is very marked. Again and again to-day, when I set a dun as lightly as I could on the water in front of one of these fish, away he went obviously alarmed, and only once could I get my fly attended to. Where a lesser stream comes in I saw a very good trout, far larger than the average W—— fish, rising amongst some scum by the bank. I managed to set my dun an inch or two in front of his nose, and he came to it. I struck, and off he went in a state of great alarm, but returned shortly to feed again near the same spot. To change flies, or, rather, to change the kind of fly, is, I believe, very often a quite useless proceeding in dry-fly fishing for trout, but it occurred to me to try a tiny black hackle spider dressed on an 000 hook. I fixed this lure on and sent it to the fish, which was

now in clear, clean water in the centre of the stream. To my delight he came, inspected with curiosity, and took it. At first he was not inclined to be violent, but swam up and down once or twice before taking me up a little ditch. I had hopes of killing him, despite the ridiculous little hook, when suddenly he seemed in a flash to remember a plank across the ditch and rushed to get under it. I held doggedly, but the hook came away, and I saw my friend dart under the plank and create a small tumult in the ditch as he dashed up under the hedge among the water plants, and so out of sight. Ah, what distress that caused! A few exclamations of pain escaped me, and looking up I saw a stolid river-keeper on the other side of the stream. He passed on, and, being at the moment very sensitive, I could have sworn somehow from the fellow's back that he rejoiced in that disaster. I think it quite likely that I might have got this fine trout by 'hand-playing' him, but I don't take kindly to this method. It does not strike me as a very noble one, and the rod, after all, seems the proper thing to kill the trout with; hand-playing seems more like sea-fishing from a small boat with a tin full of bait and plenty of large hooks.

After my day's angling I cycled in the cool of the evening the greater part of the way to Basingstoke. A fortnight ago the fields up on these chalk downs were covered in many places with sheets of bright green (the young corn) and pink (the sainfoin). Now the elder is the bloom which claims attention. This and the wild roses, the delicate, fragile dog roses, are the flowers of the midsummer, and when the days are longest the perfume of the first-named is familiar and refreshing; these flowers are to late June what the hawthorn is to May. Note, by the way, at this time of year the absolutely fresh green of the sycamore trees, with bunches of keys suffused with a ruddy glow. I stopped to admire their foliage on my way past leafy Laverstoke.

July 28-30, 1899.—Fishing at B—— Common and at W——. In the three days, or, rather, one day and two evenings, killed only three trout, but have rarely known greater joys when angling. After tremendously hot days we have had the most delicious evenings, which not even the venomous mosquitoes—that have stung me all over the hands as well as about the neck and face—can quite mar. On a soft and still July evening on the lovely common, how the mysterious darkening stream draws and takes possession of one! The grasshopper-warblers, which were reeling from many a 'tangled watercourse' a fortnight ago, are now

silent as the nightingales up in the great woods, though a night-jar is still 'purring,' as Tom Hughes expressed it, from a belt of trees near the stream. But now at the water, when the sun is behind the chalk hill, there is a sound to be heard, which is more entrancing than that of any wild creature the wild common can boast. It is the 'suck, suck!' of a good trout—he turned out to be 1 lb. 10 ounces—taking dun after dun, carried down by a strong stream in the opposite bank. I find him in a few moments, rising many times a minute, and lying against a great tussock of the 'mat' grass which dips into the water. There can be no 'drag' to speak of, seeing that the trout is in the strongest part of the current, and not in the little bit of slack water in the tiny bay above. It looks so very simple and certain that success seems almost too assured at the first accurate cast. Yet though the trout is eagerly rising and taking winged duns as they come hurrying by, and though mine goes out dry and sails over him, well cocked up on the water, he takes no notice. 'Suck, suck!' two more trout are hard at it a few yards higher up stream. I turn to them and am treated in just the same manner; they do not follow, do not inspect, are apparently unconscious. The last precious minutes of daylight are swiftly flying. Shall I change the fly—a red quill—and try a sedge, or an olive dun, or an olive quill? I decide not to, and, as it happens, decide rightly. Ten minutes later I get two of these trout, while the third—the best, I fancy, of the three—is disturbed and set down by the rush of the second, when hooked, right into his haunt. Now the moral I draw going home is, 'Don't change your fly in the evening when they are rising but won't have you.' However, two evenings later at W—I hammer away at three good fish close together and rising at dun in still water, refrain from changing my fly as the light is going so fast, and fail to get a rise out of them, and the moral I am then inclined to draw is, 'Don't fail to change your fly!' These total failures, when there is apparently a beautiful evening rise of good trout, are very distressing. They wring the heart of the sensitive dry-fly angler. The keenest delights of my angling life have been connected with the evening rise; but so, too, have been my most poignant sorrows. 'Keenest delight' and 'poignant sorrows' might seem exaggerated words when applied to a pursuit which Watton described as contemplative, Wordsworth as blameless. And yet I am scarcely conscious of any exaggeration; for this kind of angling is a passion.

So only one trout, and that not a big one, at W—that

evening, and I start to cycle back home, six miles off, as nine o'clock is striking somewhere in the Park which Charles Kingsley held to be the finest in the South of England. A cut-up flint road and an uncertain lamp, and only one trout to tell them about when they all say, 'Well, what have you done?' But there are compensations. A cool, sweet night after a tropical day, and a fragrance of meadow sweet here and clover there, and glimpses of the shining trout stream by the way, and the sight of welcome lights at the little inn at the end of the journey—such delight may serve to almost sweeten our defeats; at any rate, to leave us as keen on angling in August as we were in April.

GEORGE A. B. DEWAR.

The Wooing of Sara Lepell.

BONNY Sara Lepell sat in the embrasure of the deep oriel window of the white panelled drawing-room she specially liked to call her own, and clasped her two hands behind her copper-coloured head. The window looked south over the blue strip of English Channel not half a mile away, and its lattices were flung right back—for it was a warm September, though now day was passing towards evening.

Outside, just beneath, the gardens stretched in long prim alleys, brick laid, hedged with clipped privet; beyond, a great wilderness of fruit trees, hanging briar and honeysuckle arches, stiff rows of chestnuts, and undergrowth of flowering shrubs; then the twenty-feet-high red brick walls shut in Manor House and grounds from sight or sound of the outer world.

And inside, Sara with her short-sleeved white gown, amber necklace on whiter skin, yellow snood in copper curls, yellow trails of sash, yellow roses tucked in just where the folds of the muslin fichu crossed, sat swinging her feet in their yellow silk stockings—and looked for all the world like a bit of the gilded sunset sky.

Half her attention was for her cousin Clementina standing with a handful of different coloured ribbons before an oval bronze framed mirror on the opposite wall, half for the garden below.

It was indeed time for the lengthy after-dinner sitting to be over, even in that first decade of our century when people dined early in the afternoon and sat till sundown. There was always company to dinner at the Manor House—company of the best, though chiefly masculine. Lord Lepell would have liked to have his bonny daughter ever and always with him, but he knew what was due to his name—and never forgot she was motherless. More often than not daughter and niece—Clementina spent a good deal of her leisure time at the Manor one way and another—were sent from table long before dinner was over, poor things; sometimes, when my Lord thought well to be particularly discreet, being

ordered to take their meal in the privacy of their own rooms altogether. He had a fine sense of the proprieties, this old Whig—Tory, indeed, now the Succession was secured, but always Hanoverian. Clementina put up with its inconveniences just as she put up with the dreariness of her position as Maid of Honour at that most sober Court of the Third George.

For the loyalty of her branch of the family was but some five and twenty years old, dating merely from the restoration of 'forfeited estates.' It had to be emphasised somehow. So she bowed philosophically in the House of Rimmon, and cherished all the prejudices of her Jacobite forbears, with the memory of France as the land of their exile and her birth.

And meanwhile, as she had good reason to know, my Lord Lepell was a useful relation. He had never erred to need forgiveness that way.

Clementina could keep watch on the garden very well too, though standing back to it, for the glass tilted forwards, and she had eyes for a good deal more than her own black hair, though she was utilising her *ennui* in trying various effects of colour beside it. The sort of roving life she had led for so many years of her childhood had instinctively taught how to make use of everything. She had not grown up like Sara, a princess in her own right.

'The scarlet suits you best,' said Sara.

'Then it is not for the benefit of those charming Hanoverians'—Clementina flung out one bare olive-skinned arm, and let the ribbon dangle through her open fingers to the floor. 'Dear me, who *can* have suggested to His Gracious Majesty the foisting of a whole German Legion upon this unfortunate village? I did hope to get in the country at least a little peace from the jargon! Why didn't they send us down a nice Scotch regiment? Think how fascinating to have had the bagpipes serenading us à la Queen Mary at Holyrood!'

'The King sends the troops he can trust most. They are a splendid set of men! And *you* know——'

'Oh, we poor Highlanders have learnt by now which side our bread is buttered. But frankly now, wouldn't you feel much safer with—a *whole regiment of McInnes*, say? H'm? . . . ' How her black eyes twinkled.

'One is quite enough,' said the little Sara coldly, and all at once she drew herself very bolt upright.

'To keep off the Old Guard of France *tout ensemble*? Well

done! May the Sausage Legion—isn't that a good name, by the way?—find as staunch a defendress! She won't be me. Are you counting meanwhile on their protection supposing my Lord Napoleon trips across? I'd sooner trust the tender mercies of *his* officers any day. I wonder my uncle likes to have them continually in and out here. And as for H.R.H. of York, if he gives me his hand again to kiss I shall bite it.'

'How dare you speak like that?' cried Sara. 'And under this roof?'

'Go and tell him,' said Clementina, 'and my Uncle that His Royalty offered to embrace *me* last night—by way of a change. The McInnes would have dirked him had it been you I've no doubt; I wonder he cares to hold a commission on such a Staff.'

'He is in the service of the King!'

'So am I in the service of the Queen. And do more every day for her, bless her plain little face, than you've ever done in your life. Ten pins per day—and who can tell how much of her happiness depends on them? Well, we'll see where his long legs will carry him when Boney steps ashore!'

Sara stamped her foot on the ground.

'Have you *no* sense of honour . . .'

Clementina ostentatiously shrugged her shoulders. It was a little French trick of hers.

'I've five others all crying out for food . . . What else could you expect from an orphan—practically penniless, "*attainted*"? The McInnes now would quite understand my position, I'm sure. He only got *his* family's attainder reversed because his late Majesty had such a loathing for the old Laird, and thought after all the quickest way of sending the family to perdition would be to let them have money to ride there. And family quarrels began at once, sure enough. Oh, no offence! Of course I'm not saying for an instant that this Northern hero makes ill use of his money—it's only people like myself who have none to whom that talent clings.'

'Does Mr. McInnes confide in you, pray?' asked Sara; and Clementina noted the little red spot that began to show on either cheek, and laughed gleefully back at her own reflected image.

'I hear, by the way, all the barracks are taking fencing lessons of their prisoner of war! Fancy a poor French marquis on parole being the only swordsman in the place! Even the celebrated Laird——'

'Mr. McInnes disarmed M. du Barri easily.'

'Pardon me, 'twas the other way.'

'It was *not*.'

'Well, well, maybe. Prisoners on parole can't afford to be too successful. It answers better to be beaten sometimes. But isn't it droll, when one thinks of it? Now you ask the Laird all about it.'

'I do not take the smallest interest in the matter'—Sara tilted up her rounded chin—'I am absolutely indifferent.'

'Well, well, don't be vexed.'

'Vexed! I am *not* vexed. But I certainly am not amused to sit here while you defame my King, and—and my principles, and——'

'And your friend *aux jambes agiles*! Well, he doesn't use them to run after me, at any rate. But I told you he hadn't the sporting instinct strongly developed,' said Clementina, critically poisoning her head as she fixed in two sturdy crimping pins.

'What ill-bred things you say! And I really think you needn't come curling your hair in my sitting-room, anyhow.' Sara thrust her hot cheeks against the scented jasmine flapping in through the window. 'A Frenchman indeed! Your country's enemy! I wonder you have thought for such—such——'

Clementina only began to hum. She had just seen the reflection of what she was waiting for, and now turned away. Sara, glancing round, thought she had left the room, but in reality she was close beside her, only hidden by the sweep of the long, dark window-curtains, her black frock befriending her. There rose a sudden shadow out of the twilight, blocking the window.

'At last!'

It was the form and voice Sara, too, was waiting for, so she instantly became very frigidly reserved.

'Oh, is it you? We didn't expect to see you for a *much* longer time. Have you done all your talking? Is the Council of War ended?'

'It is for me,' said McInnes. 'Won't you come out in the garden?'

'Too cold, too damp,' said Sara, and she shook her curls over her face. 'The dew is falling. Besides—are not all the other officers out there? No? Surely you should be with them.'

The McInnes was a very tall man, and the window not very high above the ground. He leant his arms on the sill, and began to smooth an end of yellow sash-ribbon round one finger. Sara

—surely she seemed a little nervous—pulled an ivy spray towards her, and slowly picked it to pieces. When she glanced up it was to meet a pair of eyes looking so intent, and full and straight, that—— They were grey eyes, set far back and darkly rimmed. The light in them made them glow as deep water does when the sun is on it. He picked up the several little sprigs of ivy as they fluttered away, and laid them with much care one upon another in a heap on the sill.

Then, being a wise man, he began to talk—not, indeed, in an indifferent tone, for he took no pains to conceal its ring and undercurrent of stirred feeling; but his words were finely impersonal.

‘Nobody will be out yet. Our council isn’t nearly over. H.R.H. has got the plan of entrenchments with him. There’s no one inside?’

‘Clementina’s gone to——’ Sara nearly took her revenge by saying ‘to curl her hair,’ but refrained; her own curled naturally——‘tie up her snood again.’

McInnes noted every shadow on the fair little face.

‘Has she been airing her politics again? She only does it to tease. After all, isn’t it a woman’s nature—conservatism?’

(‘Sensible man!’ commented Clementina, and she echoed his laugh silently behind the curtain. ‘And he owes me more than he realises, did he but understand my fair cousin as I do!’)

He knew, at any rate, on whose side Clementina’s sympathies were in this one campaign that was just then occupying his dearest hopes, and cared not a jot about any others she might choose to have.

So he only shifted a little nearer and deliberately took the last bit of ivy right out of Sara’s fingers.

‘Tell me what you’ve been talking about,’ said Sara, evasively. She drew back so that he might not see the warm colour rising.

‘It’s the notion of the Sluices at Pevensey. We mean to set them in such a way that at any moment should the French land the Levels can be instantly flooded. The other plans are of the Martello Towers. They say it’ll take fifty thousand bricks to complete a single course of one of them! The Duke of Richmond is responsible for those, you know. They seem good——what was that?’

It was Clementina slipping unperceived out of the room, with a wicked gleam in her black eyes.

'Come out just a little way—in the garden—won't you?' pleaded McInnes persuasively.

The dining hall was all in darkness, save for the lights blazing in the big silver candelabra at one end of the long table. There were silver sconces with wax tapers branching out at intervals all down the walls, and standing out in sharp relief against their dark panelling—but these had not been wanted. Little low latticed windows, set deep and wide, opened out down each side to the west and east. At the far end, above the great fireplace, grotesque carvings of ugly monks and mediæval fantasies surrounded the deeply-cut lettering of the Lepell motto and the date 1390. Could you have pierced the forty feet of shadow to the dome-roof you would have found the same repeated on every black oaken beam. Fifty people you might put to dine at one sitting, and yet leave room. My Lord Lepell liked nothing better than to prove it.

And now, since the German Legion had added its quota to society in that little seaside Sussex village, when the terror of a French invasion beset the coast, and meetings and consultations of military authorities and country gentlemen were the order of the day, the Manor House had its echoes shaken out night after night. Not often in senseless revelry either—the air was too full of what the dark future might hold. Those were times when men waked to action first, and then drank—to victory, or oblivion of disaster!

This night there had been some serious work under discussion—a new development in fortifications, a new scheme of coast defence. Round the table at the far end some dozen men were still gathered. The polished mahogany was cleared of glasses and decanters, except where they were utilized to hold down the curling edges of an outspread parchment chart. At the head sat my Lord Lepell. On his right hand the Commander-in-Chief, H.R.H. the Duke of York.

Some of his Staff—Graeme McInnes was one, but he had slipped away—had ridden over from Brighton with him. The Duke of Richmond sat over against him; gathered round there were the senior officers of the famous German Legion.

Clementina counted them all as she stood pressed close up against the window nearest to the little oasis of light. There was a black lace shawl over head and face and neck—nothing but the

brightness of her twinkling eyes to distinguish her from the shadows all round. And all they said she heard.

There came a stir and McInnes's name was mentioned. One of the officers of the Staff got up and came swinging out through the hall into the ante-room which led to the gardens. He hummed aloud as he sauntered down the brick laid path, his spurred riding boots clanging noisily as he went, and looked nonchalantly away across the privet hedges as though he had no idea he were anywhere near either drawing-rooms or boudoirs. And long before he had reached them McInnes came sauntering down to meet him with equanimity quite as oblivious—only leaving two small hands glowing with the pressure of his lips.

'Beautiful night,' yawned the Aide-de-camp. 'The Commander-in-chief wants your ideas on Marsh Drainage, McInnes; I hope he'll release us soon. What's that star over the chimney-stacks, I wonder? I used to know 'em all once. Camping out in trenches teaches one something after all.'

He laughed easily.

Neither noticed the slim black figure crouching behind a syringa bush before she skirted the square and skimmed away down a side alley. But Sara from her post of vantage, looking down through the gathering dusk, did. And the impulse seized her to go out, too, into the fresh cool night air; the room within seemed suddenly blank and desolate.

She found her way out down through a side door, catching up a cloak as she passed along. It was one of Clementina's, she noticed, as she hung it round her and pulled the hood over her head—much too big and long and loose. However, the extra folds were all the warmer.

Her cousin was not in sight, but Sara walked quietly on half as it were in dream, her mind running back through the past, and then leaping forwards to the future—a future whose contemplation even in thought sent the blood to her cheeks and a glint to her eyes! . . . But it was not in dream that all at once there seemed to flash that curious medley of twinkling lights out of the far darkness! . . .

And Sara awoke—startled. What could it be? She put her hand up to her eyes and stared hard through the night. All was still and sombre. Suddenly again, a triangle—three stars hung low down, very low down in the sky, as it were; no mistaking this time. Two seconds—out they went. Sara waited no longer, she picked up her voluminous folds and set off running down the

path. What tricks was that wild Clementina up to now? The privet alleys came to an end; the path led on through the shrubberies. Once more, just straight in front, the three sparkling pin points flashed out. Sara began to laugh. She felt like a child playing with a will-o'-the-wisp. . . . And then—why here was the high straight brick wall of the garden fronting her. She had come right down to the very end.

But where *was* Clementina?

She recognised her exact whereabouts by catching sight in dim outline of a certain little tumbledown summer-house, built up against the garden wall, open on the other three sides. She waited a moment and then turned and slowly ascended its shaky wooden steps—perhaps her cousin was in hiding here. There was a rough-hewn oak-branch table screwed down in the middle and a couple of rustic benches. Within and without ivy and virginian creeper made a hanging tapestry from roof to floor, and the stars shone fitfully through the leaves, though there was no moon. Sara paused and stood drumming her fingers doubtfully on the rough edge of the table.

The night was wonderfully still; she could hear the plash of the first incoming wave of the flowing tide as it broke on the shore. She was soothed into reverie again with the soft familiar murmur, and did not hear the slight rustling sound close beside her which presently stirred the silence. The green tapestry parted, and two figures stood at her side. One laid his hand on her arm.

'Que vous êtes tard, Mademoiselle Lepell,' murmured a voice softly. Then indeed, but not before, she turned sharply, terrified, but in another moment, before she had time to think, speak or escape, the speaker had quickly—though quite gently—drawn her after him.

He pushed aside the ivy: it concealed an opening in the wall. As they stepped within, it fell again close and thick behind them, and Sara felt herself making a hurried descent down a succession of steps. It was perfectly dark; the air smelt damp and close.

'Prenez garde, Mademoiselle Clementina, je vous en prie.' He had not loosed her arm, and now tightened his hold to keep her from falling.

Sara had opened her mouth to scream; she shut it resolutely as he spoke the name. Hair that curls, and has a copper hue, is generally associated with a quick intuition and a capacity for instantaneous action.

This, then, was meant for Clementina. It was possible much underlay it. For Clementina's sake secrecy was perhaps necessary. Clementina she would be for the nonce. Her thoughts flew swiftly over possible contingencies. Intrigue? . . . or mere escapade? Folly, a trick . . . a love affair, or . . . *what else?* Still they went on descending swiftly and relentlessly, the soft French accents at her ear going on, too, in a kind of reassuring undercurrent. Sara heard to understand but half. She felt bewildered, confused; the long folds of her cloak kept tripping her up.

The other man went stolidly on ahead. Once only he turned round.

'Mind t' flintstones. Once they gets a holt an ye, ye doänt easy get shut of 'em. 'Tis tarrble nubbly for walking.'

The steps ended, and Sara found her feet sinking softly into a yielding ground. She stooped and furtively picked up a trail of her cloak; the hem was all damp. She put it to her lips; it was rough with sand grit, and saltish. They made a sudden turning, and a sharp current of air set athwart their faces, strong, harsh, and bracken. A confused rumble of noise, growing every moment more distinct, gave her the clue. She stretched out her free hand and met the resistance of a wall: it was slimy and wet, and a bit of moist seaweed came away. She began to understand now.

Then all at once they stopped. Her guide loosed her arm. 'Pardon, a moment,' he said, and she heard the faint patter of his footsteps quick running upon the shifting sand.

'Doänt smell so giftly like now,' said the other man. He, too, seemed to have stopped, but see she could not.

'We be amost agin t' beach. Hark how t' water rakes.'

'Yes,' murmured Sara.

'T' Captain 'll be here dracly minuat. He couldn't rightly come up hisself all through along on account of t' tide. He was a-feard ye'd ache waitin'. So we comed along fust.'

'Yes?'

Another voice at Sara's elbow; it made her start with a little cry. She had heard no one approaching.

''Tis Mistress Lepell?'

'Yes,' said Sara again. This at least was truth.

'I hope ye'll pardon my 'lowin ye to come down so far isted of my a-coming up, but t' tide's on t' turn dracly, and I couldn't rightly leave t' boat. An th' Emperor's letter I was to give ye with my own hands. If ye send any one else of an errand, he's purty sure t' make a boffle of it. Will ye take her?'

He appeared to be fumbling in his pocket, and then came the sound of cautious striking of tinder and flint. The light in a sudden flare-up showed Sara where he stood, a packet in his hand; he was looking as though to make sure of the address—and in that moment Sara, too, just caught the superscription:

'A l'égard de M. du Barri.'

She had no time to observe more. The light was out, and the letter in her hands.

'Have ye aught to go back?'

'I don't think so,' she faltered.

'Well, I doänt know as it argifies much whether I goes across to-day or whether I goes to-morrow if 'tis of count to ye. But a must shift off wi' t' tide now, or *he'll* have me, I rackon! Ye could let me hear, and I'll help t' letter to Boney sure enough. Good-night to ye, Mistress. Ye'll 'scuse me. Danvers'll see ye back wi' t' bag.'

'Good-night,' returned Sara mechanically.

Again her arm was gently taken and herself guided round, and along the passage. No one spoke during the return journey. Silently and swiftly they passed—so swiftly, that poor Sara was panting by the time they had climbed the shaking slippery steps. She tried to count them with a vague idea of possibly turning the knowledge to account. A moment's pause.

'There's t' money-purse. Good-night t' ye.'

'Au revoir, chère Mademoiselle.'

A heavy bag was swung into her hand. Sara turned hastily—to hear a click—— She was standing alone in the middle of the summer-house.

It was but for a moment, for the silence of the gardens was no longer unbroken. Voices rose and fell on the quiet evening air. Surely that was Mr. McInnes just rounding the corner. 'He came to look for me,' thought Sara, smiling to herself even then.

She dared not stop. Off she set at as quick a run as she could. Bumpety bump against her heels went the heavy bag—rattle-rattle, bang-bang—heavens, what a noise! It must be coin—coin, money, how awful! She looked wildly around through the darkness. A spreading guelder-rose bush brushed her face; in a sudden inspiration she heaved the whole thing with one great effort into its midst. It sank with a final heavy clang, and on she fled.

And now she was within sight of the house, she would soon be

in safety; the side door, with its friendly protection, stood ajar. And then all at once her foot caught, and she stumbled, and tripped over a dark heap on the ground.

'Sara! Don't scream! It's I, Clementina. I've hurt my foot. Don't speak.'

Her hand was seized in a hot grip. Clementina pulled her down beside her.

'I've hurt my foot—horribly. Don't tell any one, just help me in. They mustn't find me here. Oh! where have you been all this time?'

'Oh, Nina!—'

Clementina took her lower lip between her teeth, and spoke stiffly, but collectedly.

'Don't make a fuss. Why, what's the matter with you? Tell me quick. Where have you been? *Where have you been?*' A quick note of terrified suspicion thrilled through the hoarse whisper.

'In the shrubberies. I went to find you. I've been—I've been—'

'Did you see any one? Say! Speak! Quick!'

'Two men—no, three. They took me for you. We went down steps and a passage—by the summer-house.'

There came a short sharp exclamation. Clementina dragged herself up. The perspiration stood in beads on her forehead; her face was wrinkled and furrowed with hardly borne pain.

'Don't say another word. Get me into the house. Give me your arm.'

She clutched Sara with a grip of desperate determination. Her breath came hard and fast between clenched teeth; she leaned heavily, pausing every now and again to pass her hand over her lips. It seemed an endless journey before they stood within the house.

Clementina dropped on hands and knees, and began crawling doggedly up the stairs.

'Get some brandy if you can. Don't let the servants know,' she flung back just above her breath.

She was on the floor of her room, with her foot plunged into a water-jug, when Sara returned.

'Left my shoe and stocking in the garden. Treasure trove for some *Parley* German!' scoffed Clementina with grim amusement curling her blue lips. 'The bone's broken, I think. How did you get this? Dining-hall empty yet?'

'No,' said Sara. 'I heard talking. But Thomas had left a tray in the pantry——'

'Whew! Hanoverian Dregs! Sit down. Tell me—— My good little cousin, have mercy. Tell me quickly. Let me know the worst. I'm better now—— Is that ice? Clever child to think of it! Oh, that's better—— Who did you see, d'you say? You went down the passage——well?'

'I didn't *see* any one. It was pitch dark. There were three—— Are they smugglers?'

'Yes. It's a secret passage. You may as well know. Runs underground to the beach. You can't get out at high tide. Clever——eh?—— What did they say?'

'They gave me a bag.'

'A bag. Oh! Well?'

'And a letter.'

'A letter!——To whom? What?'

'Addressed *à l'égard de M. du Barri*——'

'Where? *Where*? Give it me——quick.'

'I've got it, somewhere. . . . I had it.'

Sara began fumbling in her pocket, in the bosom of her dress, felt all down, all over.

'I—I,' she began.

Clementina flung herself upon her.

'You've lost it!'

She was at Sara's knees, clutching the little thing by the skirts, her face with its compressed lips and gleaming eyes full of the most awful pain and terror. She shook her violently backwards and forwards.

'Oh! Oh! Perhaps it was in the summer-house. There was that bag.'

'Never mind *that*.'

'But I threw it in the guelder bush. It must have been just by the fountain——perhaps——'

'Oh, go, for mercy's sake, for mercy's sake! Find it! Go, only *go*.'

In another moment Sara was flying down once more between the privet hedges.

Two men arm in arm came sauntering down the path deep in talk. One was Graeme McInnes. Sara darted aside and flung herself face downwards on the grass, holding her breath. Thought, feeling, and sense seemed to fail her, for McInnes almost brushed her as he passed.

'I shall take it to the Commander-in-chief at once,' he was saying. 'It may be nothing, but of course Du Barri isn't in a position to be corresponding with any one except through us.'

He was carefully folding something within his breast-pocket.

Clementina was sitting just as Sara had left her—her face was bent over to her knees; the black hair fell like a veil around it; her arms hung down straight on either side, the hands clenching and unclenching automatically.

She raised her head as Sara re-entered the room, numbly interrogative, pain hardening every feature.

Sara shut to the door, but then stopped short where she stood.

'Mr. McInnes has the letter.' The two blanched faces fronted each other in a hard silent stare of stricken consternation. 'He is carrying it to the Duke.'

'You must get it from him.' It was barely a whisper, hoarse, rough, hardly audible.

Sara stood as though unhearing. There was a silently protesting note of interrogation in her attitude.

'If the Duke sees it, it means—it means not only dishonour, disgrace, for me, for us, for you—yes, for us all——' her voice began to rise shrilly.

'What is that letter?' It was Sara's voice now that had the cold dominating ring of command.

And Clementina flung back her head, and the words came hurling out as it were in defiance against the upright, motionless little figure over against her.

'It is from Napoleon to me. It is in acknowledgment of information I have given him. He has promised me the Marquis du Barri's exchange, his liberty, at the next exchange of prisoners of war. They would not, *would* not ransom him, or exchange——' her voice broke in dry, harsh sobs, 'And I have bargained for him. He is mine.'

'Information!' It just slipped from Sara's scarcely parted pallid lips.

'And if the Duke sees it—no, *you* will not suffer, none of us, not even I. But they will shoot him as a spy.'

She paused, gasped, and threw out her arms. She had forgotten her own hurt.

'Information?' repeated Sara. She suddenly glanced in-

voluntarily at her hands—she seemed to hear again that horrid clink of coin, to feel the weight of that heavy bag.

‘Shoot him! Kill him! Murder him! And he knows nothing. Is ignorant. Oh, Sara!’

Sara pressed her hands against her eyes to shut out the sight.

‘They will shoot him’—she dragged at her neck as though she were choking. ‘Oh, Sara, *you* care for Graeme McInnes; you know, you know what it means. And I care for him—I love him—— Oh, my God, how I love him! The words died away in a silence that seemed lifeless.

Sara met her eyes for a moment and then she wheeled abruptly:

‘I will get the letter,’ she said—and was gone.

The door of the dining-hall was open.

Sara stood upon its threshold and paused.

At the further end, within the circle of illumination, stood the Commander-in-chief, H.R.H. of York, with the Duke of Richmond at his elbow. The two aides-de-camp had apparently but just entered, and all four were deep in conversation. McInnes was speaking as Sara entered. There were two or three other men standing near, but they seemed insensibly to melt away as she came up the hall, withdrawing unostentatiously to a far window out of earshot. Lord Lepell had already gone out—Sara noted his absence with a faint access of relief. Indeed she seemed to note everything down to the most foolish detail. Long before she had reached the little group she had observed a white mark all along the underside of McInnes’s coat sleeve. ‘I forgot to warn him the paint on the sill was new,’ she thought mechanically.

All eyes were fixed on her as she stepped like a white-robed ghost out of the shadows that filled the lower hall into the light.

The Duke bowed and made a step forward to meet her. Of surprise at her appearance on such an occasion, alone, he showed none; for the Lepells might do as they pleased, and do no wrong, where any of the royal circle were concerned. Besides, the Duke liked pretty faces; he was always pleased to see one.

And though no one of that circle had ever looked at Sara Lepell without according her that high meed of admiration which holds no qualifying element, to-night it was a Sara whose beauty came upon one and all with a sudden sense of startling revelation.

The copper curls were a-glitter with tiny beads of iridescent

dew ; her eyes shone deep and dark, the clear colour on lip and cheek glowed to brilliancy. But there was more. There was the heart and soul of a woman, fearless and unconscious of self, looking out of the childishly young and rounded face ; and it was this contrast which struck these men, who had never before seen the little light-hearted, maidenly-reserved thing under the stress of any deep overmastering idea. The Duke looked, and held out his hand in kindly protection, as it were. And His Grace of Richmond let his lined face relax into unusual gentleness. And McInnes looked—and looked—and looked. The Aide-de-camp beside him did not wonder either. But Sara looked at no one but the Duke—the Commander-in-Chief.

‘I have come about a letter,’ she began. Ceremony was forgotten. She had but the one thought possessing her. Behind it all she knew she dared not pause to think. ‘A letter I have dropped by mistake. And——’

There went a sort of little start through the four men. McInnes suddenly braced himself up straight and impassively erect.

The Duke involuntarily thrust his hand within the breast of his coat. Sara still stood with upraised eyes fixed unswervingly upon his own.

‘It was intrusted to me,’ she said steadily, ‘and I dropped it by mistake. I understood it had been found and brought to you.’

‘But, my dear Miss Lepell,’ began the Duke ; his tone was one of grave perplexity. ‘Are you aware——’ He withdrew his hand. Sara saw it held the letter, still unopened. ‘Are you aware whom this letter concerns ?’

‘It is about M. du Barri,’ said Sara. ‘I know. But—but I lost it. And, oh, mayn’t I have it back ?’ And she suddenly, with an unconscious impulse, put out her two hands.

The Duke was reading the superscription. He looked the letter all over—and then at Sara.

The Aide-de-camp discreetly dropped out of the group.

‘The Marquis du Barri,’ began the Duke slowly, ‘is a prisoner of war. You know that. As such, no communications of any kind may go to him except through our hands. All his correspondence is examined first. I need not explain to you, I know, that such a course in these times is only right. May I ask——’

Sara stood as though she had not heard.

‘May I not have it ?’ she pleaded, hardly above her breath.

'The Duke glanced at her, and then back again at the letter. Good-natured desire to humour this pretty creature, favoured daughter of a favoured host, wrestled with more dubious feelings.

'Do you know who wrote this?' he said at last.

'Yes,' said Sara. But now the dark lashes fell over her steady eyes.

'It is not to you?'

'No.'

'But you know what it is about?'

'Yes.'

The Duke cleared his throat doubtfully once or twice, and then turned round and drank off the contents of a wineglass at his elbow.

'I'm afraid it must be opened——'

'Oh!'

'What *is* it about?'

There was a moment's pause; this time the keen eyes were remorselessly fixed on her face. Upon the mirror of Sara's mind there suddenly flashed the vision of Clementina as she had just left her—the fever in the black eyes, the ring in the broken voice, her words, her—— She raised her eyes and met the Duke's squarely.

'It is a love letter,' she said unfalteringly.

Truthful and candid as a child's indeed was her gaze. A moment before Truth, in drooping lids and quivering voice, had worn all the appearance of guilt. Now——!

He scrutinised, and believed. There was no room for distrust of a Lepell.

'Oh, indeed!' A little smile, in fact, began to curve his lips. His Grace of Richmond was making no secret of his amusement. It seemed to them now to be all part of a guileless, if not over-wise, comedy.

'In that case—I would willingly meet your wishes, Miss Lepell; you know it, I am sure. Perhaps a mere glance would suffice. Just for form's sake——'

'Oh!' She strangled the cry of terror. She could only curtsey in silent acknowledgment, but a great tear rose and fell with a splash.

'Oh, well, after all——' The kind, good-natured face looked decidedly discomposed, and then lightened, as a new idea of compromise suggested itself.

'Perhaps there is no need for me to inquire into such things;

though, believe me, I am really not without my sympathies! Suppose we delegate Mr. McInnes here. Yours was the treasure-trove?' Well did he surmise how things stood between the 'Bonny Sara' and his favourite aide-de-camp.

McInnes bowed.

'Just glance at it, and then give it to Miss Lepell. The merest formality,' turning again to Sara. 'Military discipline I need hardly excuse to your father's daughter.'

He made her a kindly little bow.

But there was nothing more to be said, and Sara knew it. Under all the good humour the final word had been pronounced.

It was a concession, but only a compromise. McInnes took the letter, and broke the seal. Not once until now had Sara dared to look at him. The Duke had turned deliberately aside, and was chatting with His Grace of Richmond. Nobody else took note.

These two were as much alone as though there were none else in the whole world beside them. McInnes smoothed out the sheet. Not a muscle of his impassive countenance moved, neither by word nor sign did he betray himself; while Sara, with her big eyes fixed in strained misery, followed his as they travelled over the paper. Would it never end? A great cold wave swept up and down and over her. All her being seemed concentrated in the following of the flicker of his eyelids as he traced the zigzag lines. And then he looked up, and Sara threw back her head and fronted him. There rose up all at once within her a desperate defiance. She would dare him to betray her!

Their eyes met. The pause seemed endless—Sara shivered down to her finger-tips. He made a step forward and bowed towards the Commander-in-chief. The Duke glanced interrogatively—caught his eye, and nodded comprehensively.

'I have the honour——,' said McInnes formally.

The room was spinning round, and the candles danced like wills-o'-the-wisp—but Sara was clutching the letter to her breast with both hands. She closed her eyes. There was a confused medley, as it appeared to her, of forms, and figures, and voices. Little spectres jeering and pointing at her, the air full of scorn, and contempt, and condemnation.

Clementina's face came looming between—— 'You care for Graeme McInnes.'

Did she? And what had she done? *What* had she done? He had soiled his honour—for her. To save hers.

She opened her eyes. The room was empty. She saw the

last officer trailing out as he followed his superiors. Only Graeme McInnes was standing over against her, cold, impassive—heavens, how stern!

And a dreadful overwhelming feeling of sheer physical fear came upon her. Her heart stood still within her—for one awful moment life itself seemed suspended.

‘How came you to know anything about this?’

Sara made no reply—in point of fact she could not.

‘Who gave you the letter?’

‘Was it your cousin Clementina?’

He paused.

‘Do you not think that you owe it to me to tell me the truth?’

He did not intentionally emphasize the last word—indeed it was really the struggle with innate Scotch reserve that made his voice sound so hard. But to Sara it came like a scourge. Still she said nothing—what could she say? It seemed to her there was nothing. Out of her own mouth she stood convicted; there *was* nothing left to say. She merely began to feel within herself how intolerably tired she was: how numb and cold and weak.

McInnes stood and looked down at her; without comment he brought forward a chair and put her into it. Then going to the table, he poured out a glass of wine and held it himself to her lips. Sara drank obediently. When he had put the glass down:

‘And how was it they took you for Clementina?’ he asked abruptly.

‘I had on her cloak,’ replied Sara unsuspectingly.

A little smile of triumph crossed McInnes’s lips. She did not notice when he left the room, and still sat mechanically fingering the empty wineglass beside her, until presently it occurred to her that it was growing very late and that the servants ought to be coming to clear the hall. It might provoke comment were she found there all by herself; besides, Clementina would be waiting. She got up and made her way to her own little white-panelled sitting-room; was it only—how long? An hour? Two, three, since she had left it? She sat down on the window seat and laid her head on the sill, ‘just where the paint came off,’ she murmured, half unconsciously to herself.

‘I must go and tell Clementina—when I’ve rested just a little bit.’

Instead of which she quietly fainted away, and when she roused

it was to find her head resting instead against a cloth coat, and Graeme McInnes's voice in her ears.

'Hadh't you better let *me* take care of you for the future?' he said.

Sara liked the feel of that coat against her cheek: it brought her somehow a comforting assurance of safety and protection. She nestled a little closer for all answer.

The McInnes had found less than no difficulty in abstracting the truth from Clementina. Neither had he to go far in search of her. She had crawled out again half way down the stairs, and the first thing his eyes fell upon when he left the dining-hall was her white face gleaming as she lay huddled up in the wide recess that lighted the first shallow flight.

But when she had finished, answered all his questions, and wound up with a little mocking laugh, that strangely contrasted with the drawn pallid exhaustion of her face, McInnes found very little to say. Argument with a woman in the last stage of acute physical suffering, and whose callous defiance is too carelessly patent for any possibility of its being assumed, is a thing in which a man finds himself at an insurmountable disadvantage.

'So now you see,' she said indifferently. It was the indifference born of despair. 'You know all about it, and can do as you like. Nothing matters now. Clap me in gaol for all I care—where better men are——,' she laughed harshly. 'Tell the world; tell every one. Disgrace me wherever you please. I don't care. I've lost. You've won—you and your King. Pah! That's all—— And if I'd the chance over again I should do just the same: so now you know. You needn't think I'm in the least sorry—except in being found out. Ashamed? Why, pray? I've never owned your *soi-disant* King. My King is——,' her lip curled a moment.

She threw back her head and looked him unflinchingly in the face. 'The Marquis du Barri,' he intuitively guessed was the ending to that sentence, and somehow the gesture reminded him of Sara. He put up one hand deprecatingly.

'You assure me Du Barri knew nothing of your—your design?'

'I never told him,' said Clementina, with a weary petulance in her voice that convinced him of the truth of her words. Her thoughts seemed already to have flown beyond him.

'Well,' she said again, 'I've nothing more to say. Do as you

like. Perhaps you'll excuse me now. Why not go back to Sara? Poor little Sara! Fancy her romancing like that! And to her hero the Duke!' And she began to laugh in her old mocking way that covered so much.

McInnes went.

And exactly what he did or how he did it neither Clementina nor Sara ever wholly knew. But certain things happened in that community which bore more or less on all their fortunes before many months had passed.

For the Marquis du Barri was immediately transferred to Brighton; but the next list of prisoners to be exchanged bore his name.

And Clementina, of her own accord, resigned her post at Court, but it was merely to settle down at the Manor. And the little old summer-house was pulled down; but my Lord Lepell never missed it, and it was Princess Sara who ordered it to be done. I think myself that the repairing of that breach in the wall was accomplished by the same local talent which had so ingeniously turned it to account; and make no doubt those masons and carpenters smiled grimly enough to themselves over the job.

But there was one penalty the Princess will always have to pay. For next time she saw the Duke it was with Graeme McInnes, as her *fiancé*, beside her. And the Duke, as she curtsied to receive his good wishes, first kissed her gallantly on the forehead, and then looked from her to his junior aide-de-camp with a subdued twinkle in his eye.

'So my Aide-de-camp is going to revise your correspondence altogether, is he, Miss Lepell?' he said, and laughed as he passed on.

And Sara knew that her falsehood had been believed only too well, with a possible interpretation which was as gall and aloes to her proud spirit.

For it is certain that so long as the Duke does not know the whole truth he will choose to believe his own version.

VIOLET A. SIMPSON.

Wild Fruits.

IN the olden times, when the conditions of life were far more simple than they are now, the use made of wild plants was considerably greater. In days when cottage gardens and allotment grounds were almost unknown, our forefathers were accustomed to gather pot-herbs for use as vegetables. The leaves of mercury, good-King-Henry, and of the wild beet-root were boiled as spinach; and the roots of *Smyrniūm olusatrum*, or alexanders, were used as celery. The wild sea-kale was bleached with sand or shingle on the seashore, and the wild cabbage was gathered on the cliffs. In the place of lettuce, watercress from the running brook was extensively used, together with corn-salad and the leaves of dandelion. Before the days of parish doctors, and of quack medicines now so widely advertised and so largely purchased by our poorer people, the knowledge of 'simples' was very considerable among the good women in country places. In every village some one skilled in the use of herbs was sure to be found ready and able to minister to the sick. The gathering of simples was a recognised branch of industry in those primitive times. Agrimony, and eyebright, and scurvy-grass, and lungwort, and Solomon's-seal, and many another native plant, was then duly gathered and prepared against the time of need. The virtue of many of these herbs seems to be beyond question, but they are never used now. They may still be found, by those learned in the ways of plants, growing in our copses and hedgerows, or along the banks of streams, but their very names are mostly forgotten by the country people.

In our native flora there are a goodly number of 'trees yielding fruit' which in former years were highly prized among our forefathers. The use of these wild fruits is not now so general as it used to be; in many instances it is altogether obsolete, but the subject is one full of interest to all lovers of country life.

In Saxon and mediæval times, even after the introduction of

wheat and other cereals, there can be little doubt that acorns were regularly used by the poorer peasants for the purposes of making bread, and not only in seasons of scarcity, but as a general article of food. Oak trees were then chiefly valued because of the acorns which they produced. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 1116, which is described as 'a very calamitous year, the crops being spoiled by the heavy rains, which came on just before August and lasted till Candlemas,' it is expressly recorded as an aggravation of the 'heavy time' that 'mast was also so scarce this year that none was to be heard of in all this land or in Wales.' The days of mast-bread are happily gone for ever; and even barley-bread, in common use during severe winters not so many years ago, has now everywhere given place to that of 'the finest wheat flour.' The fruit of one member of the same order is, however, highly valued. We refer, of course, to the hazel, so abundant in our woods and hedgerows. To go a-nutting is still as popular a pastime as in former years; but the old customs in connection with it are as obsolete as the use of acorn bread. No one will now be found, with the good Vicar of Wakefield and his honest neighbours, to 'religiously crack nuts on Michaelmas eve.'

It is to the order *Rosaceæ*, the rose order, that most of our wild fruits belong. In this large and important tribe are included such well-known examples as plums, cherries, strawberries, raspberries, apples, and pears, all of which may be found in a wild state in Britain. Plums are represented in our native flora by three species, or sub-species, the common sloe or blackthorn, the bullace, and the wild plum. The latter can hardly perhaps be pronounced with certainty to be indigenous, though it is often found in apparently wild situations, but of the other two species there can be no question. The sloe-bush or blackthorn, known as 'winter keeksies' in the Isle of Wight, is very common in our thickets and hedgerows, and the fruit is still gathered for the purpose of making sloe-gin. Old Nicholas Culpeper says, and truly, that 'the fruit ripens after all other plums whatsoever, and is not fit to be eaten until the autumn frost mellow them.' The bullace, though less common than the last, is still plentiful in many districts, as, for instance, in the Isle of Wight, where it was formerly gathered by the country people, and taken into market for sale for the purpose of making tarts and puddings. 'I once, wrote Dr. Bromfield of Ryde in the year 1848, 'brought home a quart or more of these wild bullaces, and had them made into a

tart, which was one of the best flavoured and most juicy I ever partook of.'

A near relation of the bullace is the wild cherry tree, or merry-tree, also known in certain districts as the 'Gean.' This handsome tree is the origin of the Geans, Hearts, and Bigaroon cherries of our gardens, and is not uncommon in woods and copses in the south of England, where it may be considered indigenous. A dwarf variety of the 'Gean,' but thought by some botanists to be a distinct species, is *Prunus cerasus*, a bush with copious suckers, first discovered to be a British plant by Dr. Bromfield in 1839, when he found it in 'a wood between Whippingham Street and Wootton Church, but nearer to the former, and close to a place called Blankets, growing plentifully and apparently indigenous.' This shrub, which is not uncommon in the Isle of Wight, is the parent stock of such well-known varieties as the Morello, Duke, and Kentish cherries.

Of all the *genera* in the British flora there is none so puzzling to the botanist, because of the vast number and uncertain character of its varieties, as the *rubus*, or bramble. To this family belong the well-known blackberry of our hedgerows, the raspberry, and the cloudberry. This latter is an Alpine species, growing only some six inches in height, and much prized in the north of England and in Scotland for its graceful orange berries, which are eaten fresh or preserved. In Norway, we are told, the fruit is regularly gathered, packed in wooden vessels, and sent to Stockholm, where it is served in desserts or made into tarts. The plant is so abundant in Lapland that the celebrated traveller, Dr. Clarke, observes, 'Whenever we walked near the river we found whole acres covered with these blushing berries (at first crimson, afterwards becoming yellow), hanging so thick that we could not avoid treading upon them.' The dewberry is a well-known variety of the common bramble, marked by its creeping habit and the glaucous bloom which covers its fruit. The origin of the name is obscure, but Dr. Prior would connect it in some manner with the 'Theve-thorn,' a word which occurs in Wycliffe's Bible, as the rendering of *rhamnus*, in the story of Jotham's parable of the Trees. It is not known what species of bramble Wycliffe meant by the 'Theve-thorn'; but monkish commentators, doubtless following some ecclesiastical tradition, understood the *rhamnus* to be the dewberry.

The wild raspberry, the origin of our garden varieties, is common enough in woods, especially in the north of England.

This plant is commonly called 'hindberry' by the early botanists; and it is curious to notice that old Gerarde remarks that the fruit is 'in taste not very pleasant.' Such, however, was not his opinion of the strawberry. As old Izaak Walton happily says, quoting one Dr. Boteler, 'Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did.' And the strawberry of those days seems to have been only the wild strawberry of the woods, doubtless improved by cultivation. It flourished, as we know from Shakespeare, in the Bishop of Ely's garden at Holborn, which was equally celebrated for its roses and its saffron crocuses. 'Wife,' says Thomas Tusser, the homely farmer-poet of Suffolk, in the sixteenth century—

'Wife, in thy garden, and set me a plot
With Strawberry rootes of the best to be got:
Such growing abroade, among Thornes in the wood,
Wel chosen and picked, prove excellent good.'

And even in the next century, as Mr. Ellacombe reminds us, Sir Hugh Plat, in his *Garden of Eden*, says:—'Strawberries which grow in woods prosper best in gardens.' And these wild strawberries, so abundant in shady places throughout England, and as far north as the Shetland Isles, are doubtless the origin of the cultivated varieties.

In these days of advanced horticulture the fruit of the wild apple (*Pyrus malus*), and of the wild pear (*P. communis*), would hardly be regarded as 'good for food;' but it is certain that in ancient times they were both largely used. In the lake-dwellings of Switzerland and Italy great quantities of wild apples and a few wild pears have been found. 'The inhabitants of the *terra-mare* of Parma, and of the palafittes of the lakes of Lombardy, Savoy, and Switzerland,' says De Candolle, 'made great use of apples. They always cut them lengthways, and preserved them dried as a provision for the winter. The specimens are often carbonised by fire, but the internal structure of the fruit is only the more clearly to be distinguished.' And from a scientific examination of these carbonised specimens it seems to be established that many of these ancient apples were almost identical with the wild apple of to-day. But even in the sixteenth century the crab-apple of our woods was held in far higher esteem than it is now. 'Roasted crabs' served with hot ale was, as we learn from Shakespeare, a favourite dish among our forefathers, especially at Christmas time. Another use of the crab-apple was in the making of verjuice, of which

mention is made by good old Izaak Walton in his *Compleat Angler*: 'When next you come this way,' says the honest milk-woman, 'if you will but speak the word I will make you a good syllabub of new verjuice, and you shall sit down in a haycock and eat it.' But we don't care for such rustic delicacies now.

Like the wild strawberry, the cultivation of currants and gooseberries was unknown among the Greeks and Romans, and dates only from the sixteenth century. It has been a matter of dispute whether these shrubs should be considered as genuine natives of Great Britain; but, in the light of further research, this claim to be indigenous, at least in the north of England, will now hardly be denied. In the southern counties, though the species are now common enough in woods and thickets, it is possible that they may be escapes from cultivation. It is interesting to notice that the illustrious John Ray speaks of black currants as 'squianancy-berries,' a name which shows that they were commonly used then, as now, in cases of sore-throat. He also mentions the bush as growing wild 'here in our neighbourhood by the Hoppet Bridge, near Braintree,' in Essex; where, however, it is no longer to be found.

The fruit of the wild elder, which, says old Culpeper, need not be described, 'since every boy that plays with a pop-gun will not mistake another tree instead of elder,' is still gathered by country people for the purpose of making elderberry wine, which is held to possess considerable medicinal virtue. 'If,' says John Evelyn, 'the medicinal properties of the leaves, bark, and berries of this tree were thoroughly known, I cannot tell what our countrymen could ail for which they might not find a remedy from every hedge, either for sickness or wound.' These so-called natural remedies are now seldom employed; it is therefore the more interesting to notice that elderberry wine is still frequently used by poor people in country places.

In former years the common barberry seems to have been far commoner in our hedgerows than it is now. Ray mentions this handsome shrub as abundant in his day about Saffron Walden, in Essex; but the same cannot be said now. In Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, the district best known botanically to the writer, it is a very rare plant; and its present scarcity is doubtless to be explained by an opinion, once very general though entirely unfounded, that its presence caused mildew in wheat. Hence the barberry was extirpated in many places, and has now become extremely scarce. It was formerly known as the Pipperidge-bush, that is, *red-pip*, a name descriptive of the colour and character of

its berries, which were preserved in various ways. It is a curious fact that the juniper, so abundant on many of the chalk downs of Hampshire, as for instance about Petersfield, should be absent from the flora of the Isle of Wight. In former years juniper berries were far more commonly used than now, especially for the purpose of flavouring Hollands or gin. They were also generally employed in the curing of hams, but for this purpose they are now rarely sought after.

Several species of the order *Ericaceæ*, or Heath tribe, produce berries good for food. Of these the best known are the bilberry and the cranberry. The former, also known as whortleberries, are abundant in Scotland and the north of England, and in certain districts in the south, as about Hindhead, in Surrey. Gilbert White recorded the plant as found on 'the dry hillocks of Wolmer Forest,' where it still flourishes in great abundance. The berries, known locally as 'whorts,' make excellent tarts, for which purpose they are annually gathered by the gipsies and country people and sold in the neighbouring towns and villages. The cranberry, a near relative of the whortleberry, is found in peat bogs, and is a beautiful plant, with its bright red flowers and evergreen leaves, the margins of which are always rolled back, and its wiry stems creeping over the sphagnum moss. In the south of England the plant is rare, but the writer has found it 'in the bogs of Bin's Pond,' near Selborne, where Gilbert White noticed it more than a hundred years ago. Where the plant is plentiful, as in the north of England, the berries are much sought after for the purpose of making cranberry tarts; and at Longtown, on the borders of Cumberland, it is said to form no inconsiderable article of trade. In the hilly districts of the north another member of the same tribe, known as cowberry, is also found, the berries of which resemble those of the cranberry, for which, especially in Derbyshire, they are often sold.

In conclusion one more plant, belonging to the *Ericaceæ*, must be mentioned. This is the handsome evergreen shrub, *Arbutus unedo*, the strawberry tree, which grows abundantly in a wild state about the beautiful lakes of Killarney. The fruit, which resembles a strawberry in shape and colour, is occasionally eaten by the Irish peasantry. It is, however, very dry and of a somewhat insipid flavour. Indeed, it is this characteristic of the fruit which originally gave to the plant its specific name of *unedo*, 'One-I-eat,' as if to imply that no man having tasted a berry would straightway desire a second.

JOHN VAUGHAN.

At the Sign of the Ship.

AMONG interesting new books, one may almost place the edition of *Jane Eyre* with a criticism by Mrs. Humphry Ward. The critic *is* a critic, and not a mere eulogist. She recognises the puzzles and impossibilities of the plot, and the errors which arose from Miss Brontë's personal ignorance of the Rochesters, Baroness Ingrams, and the manners of their society. About them Miss Brontë's information must have been derived from other novels, themselves ill informed. 'Heavy grotesque, without either the truth or the fun of good satire,' was only one of the consequences of limitations for which Miss Brontë was not wholly responsible. But when Mrs. Ward criticises what we may call the 'machinery' of the novel, the adventures of the fire, the blinding of Rochester, the 'phantom voice' which summons Jane to her lover's side, I am not certain that she is not attacking an element in the popularity of the book. It did not win its way merely by the 'psychological' interest, great as that is in the character of the heroine, but also by being 'horrid' in the sense admired by Miss Austen's Catherine Morland. There is a good deal of the *Mysteries of Udolpho* in *Jane Eyre*, and readers, for long unaccustomed to this kind of romance, enjoyed it when they got it. The 'modern novelist of feeling and passion,' says Mrs. Ward, 'prides himself on renouncing the more mechanical and external sort of plot-making.' But surely I remember some kind of 'phantom,' later explained away, even in Mrs. Ward's own *Helbeck of Banisdale*. That figure, I fancy, was founded on a local tradition in Cumberland. Now Miss Brontë said, as to the 'phantom voice,' that the thing really happened, apparently in her own experience. Everything that really happens is not necessarily good to introduce in fiction, but the circumstance was quite in keeping with the Radcliffian character of *Jane Eyre*. Now, suppose you cut out of the novel all that Mrs. Ward not unjustly censures; the improbable

brutality of Rochester, the phantom voice, the fire, the mad wife who prowls about like a vampire—what, I ask, is left for the ‘feeling and passion’ of *Jane Eyre* to develop itself upon and around? What, now, will her position be, and of what sort will be her relations to Rochester? The novel would be something totally different from what it is, and we cannot at all imagine how Jane’s character would find room to expand: how her courage, devotion, austerity could display themselves. Criticism of this kind is like that of Jeffrey, who wanted Scott to cut the Goblin Page out of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. But, no Page, no Lay. So, no brutal Rochester, no phantom voice, no mad night-wandering wife, and no fire, would result in no *Jane Eyre*. Mrs. Ward says that ‘the strong, free, passionate personality of the writer’ is ‘the sole but sufficient charm of these books.’ No doubt to Mrs. Ward it is the sole charm, and it is certainly a sufficient charm, but to the world of less critical readers the story was the thing. Now the story could not exist without the machinery.

* * *

Often, in writing ‘Introductions’ more or less critical, to the novels of Scott and Dickens, especially Dickens, I have felt as if it were ‘seething the kid in the mother’s milk.’ What business had I, what business has anybody, to come, with objections and criticisms, between the author and his public? I hope that readers to whom these great classical novels are new will always read the novel before they read the preface. To others, of course, the study of these criticisms is like conversation about the book with somebody who has recently read it. Thus to me, and most people, Mrs. Ward’s preface is of high interest. But one ought certainly to have read the novel first: otherwise the critique is apt to take off the pleasure and destroy the bloom of the romance. Perhaps the Introduction ought to be purely biographical and bibliographical, an account of the conditions in which the author composed his book. But, somehow, the Introducer is apt to glide into criticism, even into objections. *Peccavi, mea maxima culpa*. Yet we do little harm, or none, if only the student will read the novel—first. And nothing can be more interesting to people familiar with the novels of Miss Brontë than Mrs. Ward’s remarks.

* * *

As my sympathies are not wholly engaged with ‘Stalky and Co,’ in their long and successful combat with their masters,

I prefer to say very little about these heroes. Whatever else they may be, they are not normal schoolboys. Their eternal use of the word 'giddy' is teasing; their slang is not 'of the centre,' and, of course, as one of them avers, they are not public school-boys, and do not represent the public schools. More agreeable fellows are Mr. Eden Phillpotts's heroes in that delightful book *The Human Boy*. The study of hysterical superstition in the *Piebald Rat* is a little *chef-d'œuvre*, and how gracious are the two little would-be buccaneers, 'never known to shed a tear'! Of course no book on boys can be literally exact, for reasons of various kinds, but *The Human Boy* is highly entertaining and humorous. Then I am wholly captivated by those perfect little trumps, Mrs. Nesbit's characters in *The Treasure Seekers*. This is a truly novel and original set of adventures, and of the finest tone in the world. Don't be content to read *The Treasure Seekers*, but give it, also, to children. They will all bless the name of Mrs. Nesbit.

* . *

Another novel which has amused me is Mr. Mason's *Miranda of the Balcony*. I ought not to criticise my 'friend and pardner,' but perhaps Mr. Mason does not take himself seriously enough. It is an amiable, and in young novelists an almost unprecedented error. I cannot but think that Mr. Mason let his high spirits carry him away in the case of Major Wilbraham: entertaining that miscreant is, but one does not precisely believe in a professional blackmailer whose ambition is to translate Horace. He is too much idealised. Nor can I quite accept the story that Miranda got up her behaviour after the manner of the Widow Wadman out of an old French manual of coquetry. From the cradle the untutored fair can flirt—if they choose. However Miranda gains our hearts, and the adventures in Morocco, with the strange and vivid landscape, cannot be overpraised. It is a most vivacious and readable book, with a very original plot, a book for which to be grateful.

* . *

Then, in a serious way, we have the historical essays in Mr. Round's *Commune of London*. These are self-sacrificing studies, each of which involves I don't know how much of patient poring over old dreary MSS. about the financial expedients of seven hundred years ago. The novel-reader cares for none of these things (myself, I never read but two modern Budget speeches), yet

without these labours history is based on a shaking bog. Mr. Round and his comrades in such hard unpopular toils, build the foundations of history, as coral insects build a coral reef. Perhaps they are a little too apt to quarrel among themselves and to catch each other out in errors. We have heard enough of Mr. Freeman's 'palisade' at the battle of Hastings, for example. Mr. Round is right, I have little doubt, but he has been right so often! Controversy is often agreeable writing; much of it I have written, and now conceive that I might have used my time more wisely. It makes little impression on the public, and on an opponent I fear it makes no impression at all. Yet it is not easy to live up to this wisdom.

* * *

At the opposite pole from Mr. Round's minute and austere researches is Mr. Henry Gray Graham's 'Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century.' This is a book full of curious traits of life and amusing anecdotes. Many of the facts we knew before, of course, from the works of Robert Chambers and from the published letters, and account books, and diaries of members of Scottish families. But Mr. Graham has brought together a mass of details, new to me among others. It was a poor, dirty, drunken life that the Scottish gentry lived in the first half of last century. Now, either the dirt and discomfort are exaggerated, or Scotland strangely declined, in material civilisation, between 1500 and 1700. In 1506, or thereabouts, the Spanish ambassador to the Court of James IV. wrote, 'The houses are good, all built of stone, and provided with glass windows, excellent doors, and abundant chimneys.' The women 'are well-dressed, better dressed than the English.' Yet coin was very scarce, and, before a war, the king would pawn his gold chain, and coin his plate. Yet, about 1700-1750, matters had advanced so little that 'the windows had no sash or pulley.' 'The bedrooms rarely had grates,' 'most of them were destitute of fire-places.' Now I find this hard to believe. Take a certain *château* in Fife, not that of a great peer, but of a country gentleman. The rooms (built between 1550 and 1600) are large, numerous, and well-proportioned. There are, as Ayala said, 'abundant chimneys,' plenty of 'fire-rooms.' That robber chief, Macdonnell of Barisdale, built, about 1740, in the remotest corner of Knoydart, a house with eighteen 'fire-rooms,' and the Lowlands must have been greatly in advance. The old house of Corrimonie, in Glen Moriston, is

large and comfortable, and was just finished in 1745. Then the picturesque little *château* of Earlshall, near St. Andrews, has a great spacious gallery, and a large dining hall, if the bedrooms are small. Take Brahan, Seaforth's house, surely there are rooms enough, and large spacious rooms withal. One can hardly suppose that there were beds in the drawing rooms of such houses, though there were at Ravelston, and at Cawdor Castle, so one cannot be sure of a negative. As to food, for half the year the Scot lived on salt beef and had scarcely any vegetables. Perhaps this accounts for the prevalence of a cutaneous disease which was matter of reproach to my countrymen. Doctors' bills prove that it was common enough, and I could give other evidence were I not so patriotic. Tea must have been commonly used by 1720, and helped to correct the old habit of taking 'a morning,' often a glass of raw whisky. Claret was among the few commodities both good and cheap. Food among the gentry was mainly beef, broth, fowls paid as rent in kind, porridge, pigeons (the laird's pigeons devastated the fields of the peasants), but there must also have been game, trout, salmon, and venison. 'Table and body linen were seldom changed, and but coarse . . . moving necks and sleeves of better kind' (false collars, fronts, and cuffs) 'being then used only by the best,' Sir Alexander Grant wrote, speaking of 1720. Alas, I fear we were not a clean people!

* * *

'The son of the nobleman and the son of the carpenter sat in the same room and had the same instruction.' In spite of the strong distinctions of social rank, all classes were thus well acquainted with each other. The women, as their letters prove, were very ill-educated, and their reading was much confined to Calvinistic theology. But the catalogue of the library of Duncan Forbes, of Culloden (sold in 1746), shows a large collection of good books, in English, French, and Latin. Mr. Graham says that 'no pious Presbyterian would allow secular books, romances, and plays, besides decorous history and classics, to pollute his room.' This must be an exaggeration. Latin was found very widely known in the Highlands by Dr. Johnson, who also admired the learning of some of the island ministers. Wodrow, about 1720, was really a learned man, and in correspondence with the learned. If Lady Bargarran advertised the thread made by her daughters she had good reason. They introduced the great thread manufactories, thanks to the skill of a daughter, who in

childhood had been bewitched, for which some seven poor women were burned. Indeed, the transition from witchcraft to the Renfrew manufactures centred in the Bargarran family. Art was not flourishing; portraits were cheap and bad; there was no ready money to pay a painter. The badness attributed to the inns is hardly in accordance with Richard Frank's report in his *Northern Memoirs*, written about 1650. In fact, Frank is much kinder to old Scotland than Mr. Graham. The filth of Edinburgh, however, is undeniable: see *Humphrey Clinker*. Living within the old Flodden wall, the citizens built high, close, and narrow, and the accommodation must have been festering.

* * *

The state of agriculture was wretched beyond words. The farmer was crushed by 'services,' labour done for the Laird. As draining was unknown, men ploughed the sides of Schiehallion; the carses and straths by the rivers were too damp for agriculture. The ministers denounced the use of winnowing machines and of mill dams as impious. Providence was lord of the ways of wind and water. When fields began to be enclosed there were rebellions. Wheat was less cultivated than it had been in the Middle Ages. The Lothians saw the rise of larger farms under men of capital. But Burns, coming from Ayrshire, found much more intelligence and information among the small distressed farmers of the West than among the labourers of the East. As late as 1795 the feudal tyrannies connected with mills endured in Aberdeenshire. As to the tyrannies and distresses of the Kirk, starved and ill-sheltered in damp and almost roofless tabernacles, Mr. Graham's book is full of curious information. Yet, when all is said, people were probably as happy in those hard years as they are now, or are ever likely to be. In all ranks there was much sympathy and good-fellowship.

* * *

It was after writing what follows on Mr. Grant Allen's account of his own career as a novelist that I received the news of his lamented death. I had just learned that he was suffering so terribly from a disease which baffled the physicians that his friends could hardly desire his life to be prolonged. Others have written of Mr. Allen's genius, the most versatile, beyond comparison, of any man in our age. Had he been able to devote himself entirely to physical science, as he desired, it is not for me to conjecture what he might have added to the sum of human knowledge. But his education at Oxford had been

classical, and he was an unendowed student of his favourite themes. He had to live by his pen, and by scientific works he could not live. Whatever he touched (and what did he not touch?) he made attractive. Verse came to him as readily as prose; fiction was his popular vein, yet he did not feel much pleasure even in reading novels. I first heard of him, from another undergraduate, now of literary fame, at Merton, about 1872, but never met him till he came to town and worked at science and in journalism. His beginnings were difficult, as he has said, and in circumstances very trying he displayed noble attributes of character which I can only hint at. Indeed, Mr. Allen behaved, if I may say so, more thoroughly in the spirit of the Gospel than any man I ever met, though his intellect rejected so much that religion believes. He was charitable, self-denying, and could forgive not only his enemies, but his friends. Something, I fear, he had to forgive in me, for we differed, *toto cœlo*, on points concerned with the comparative study of religion, and I made too polemical replies to his philosophy. To me he did not seem very well grounded in details of the life of the lower races, on which he liked to write. But his good humour was not to be shaken, and in one case I have to regret some petulant expressions. Mr. Allen's theory of the relations of the sexes, again, was one to which I could not come in. Marriage, like all things, however, has its drawbacks, but the experience of the race has discovered no better solution of the problem. On this point Mr. Allen's humour seemed to desert him, as Mr. Traill showed in a witty parody of 'The British Barbarians.' Much licence was claimed for the passionate fair, but, put a married man in a similar case, and the New Morality was found wanting. Mr. Allen's desire was to improve human conditions, and the audacity of his genius overlooked certain sides of the question. In personal discussion he was always most gentle and urbane, whatever the theme, about which we were certain to differ. Of his kindness, were it fitting, of his unwearied benevolence, I could cite singular examples. These are the things which remain fragrant in the dust: when work, consciously ephemeral, but necessary, has faded like sunburnt flowers. Mr. Allen accepted his lot bravely, doing what circumstances compelled him to do when his heart was elsewhere. A more courageous heart no man bore, for his whole life was martyred by constant ill-health. In this respect he resembled Mr. Stevenson.

* *

Mr. Grant Allen's account of how he became a novelist, in the preface to his 'Twelve Tales,' is most curious. His interests, as we all know, were scientific, and he never seems to have suspected that he had any skill in narrative. He began with a mere parable or fable 'on the improbability of a man's being able to recognise a ghost as such, even if he saw one.' I presume the seer would arrive at his result by the method of exclusions: 'It is not anything else, therefore it is a ghost.' 'The impossibility of applying any test of credibility to an apparition's statements' is not obvious. Apparitions are always saying that there is a treasure, or a corpse, in such or such a place. On examination made no such things are found. There is the test of credibility, and 'apparitional evidence' usually breaks down. His fable or parable on this topic was so much liked by his editor that Mr. Allen went 'on the downward path which leads to fiction,' the upward path, one may say, judging by many of his excellent stories. He never concealed the fact that he would rather write on deep scientific themes, and he was a novelist against his will, yet a most successful artist in the art for which he did not care. Nothing can be more unusual, for the novelist is usually born to be so, and tells stories to himself and others from his childhood upwards.

* * *

Nothing was more characteristic of Mr. Allen than the story which he told about a short novel, 'Kali's Shrine.' The germ of the tale was sent to me by a lady, and I suggested her collaboration with Mr. Allen. There was something of 'the supernatural' (which he detested) in the romance, so he cut some nerve or other of the heroine's and rounded the point in that way, though he knew that he was writing false science. Anything was better than 'the supernatural,' even a consciously false explanation. For such reasons I used to tell Mr. Allen that he was really as obscurantist as any Inquisitor. He thought that the end (science) justified the means. Once, I think, he did confess to something of this defect, in conversation, or perhaps he only 'put the question by' as one of the many on which we could never agree. He was a most charming companion, and marvelled much that one could never see the world as he saw it. He would give a little evolutionary lecture, and I would answer 'God is great.' These were irreconcilable differences!

* * *

An extreme interest in Mr. Kipling's psychology, I suppose, makes amateurs pay over a hundred pounds apiece for the school magazine in which he wrote, and for his schoolboy poems. These were 'the first sprightly runnings,' and I would give a guinea to be allowed to read them, for they must be very sprightly indeed. More I would give to see the original poems from which Mr. Kipling used to select mottoes for his tales—that is, if there were such poems, and if the snatches were not the same sort of things as Scott's 'Deluge. A Poem,' and his 'Old Play.' But even if I were a millionaire I doubt that I should reckon 115*l.* dear for a few numbers of a school magazine. These prices arise, I presume, from the collector's desire of completeness—his longing to possess every mortal thing that came from his favourite's pen. Lately I saw a 'complete' set of Dickens in original editions. There was included 'The Loving Ballad of Lord Bateman,' which ought to have been in the Thackeray set, for Thackeray, not Dickens, wrote the Notes and Introduction. If you doubt me, read these gems; internal evidence is overpowering. The style is exactly that of Thackeray's notes to his own 'Timbuctoo.'

* * *

I wish I had kept my own unsuccessful *Newdigates*! They would not sell for 115*l.*, but they would amuse their author. I had a try at 'Marie Antoinette,' about 1867, beginning with a rapt description of the Lisbon earthquake, which happened about the time when the poor lady was born. I did it as much as I could like Mr. Swinburne: examiners did not rise to it. I rather think Mr. Courthope was the winner. At all events, the winner was not Swinburnian. I also did Mexico, in the manner of Captain Mayne Reid, but did not send it in. Ah! and how I wish I had kept my first novel on Queen Mary! The plot was adequate. Queen Elizabeth, entering Scotland in male costume, is mistaken for Darnley, and is blown up in the Kirk of Field. Darnley escapes to England, and passes the rest of his life disguised as Queen Elizabeth. That was why Queen Elizabeth was never married. At that time I did not know that Sir James Melville had proposed to Elizabeth to come to Scotland with him, disguised as his page. I remember that Shakespeare attended the disguised Elizabeth (about 1565!), and always spoke in blank verse.

* * *

At Oxford House, in Bethnal Green, they tell me that Bethnal Green loves Shakespeare dearly—that no study is so popular.

This is indeed good news in an age when the *literati* buzz only over the last new novel. I do not believe that the *literati* like Shakespeare any better than Mr. Darwin did. True taste is of the people. This is a consoling thing to know, when we hear the shrieks over twopenny 'masterpieces.' There are hours when we feel Shakespeare to be almost crushing. The extraordinary abundance of his mind weighs upon us; we cannot endure it. And I hope that is one reason why we, most of us, read Shakespeare so little. But, alas! there are probably other and worse reasons.

ANDREW LANG.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss. All communications should be addressed to

The Editor of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE,
39 Paternoster Row, London, E.C.

